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A hymn to India

Rabindranath Tagore

Awake my mind, gently awake
in this holy place of pilgrimage
on the shore of this vast sea of humanity
that is India.

Here I stand with arms outstretched to hail man,
man divine in his own image,
and sing to his glory in notes glad and free.
These mountains rapt in meditation,
these plains with rivers winding like rosaries,
behold this earth that is ever holy—
on the shore of this vast sea of humanity
that is India.

No one knows whence and at whose call came pouring
endless inundations of men
rushing madly along—to lose themselves in the sea:
Aryans and non-Aryans, Dravidians and Chinese,
Scythians, Huns, Pathans and Moghuls—
all are mixed, merged and lost in one body.
Now the door has opened to the West
and gifts in hand they beckon and come—
they will give and take, meet and bring together,
none shall be turned away
from the shore of this vast sea of humanity
that is India.

These battling hordes who crashed into our midst
with frenzied war-cries,
cutting their way through deserts and over mountains,
they are all, one and all, become a pulse of my being,
none is far away,
in my blood throbs the echo of their diverse music.
O celestial music, fierce and terrible,
let thy notes sound louder and louder,
the walls that divide shall crumble
and they who stand aloof in the arrogance of isolation
they too shall come and crowd together—
on the shore of this vast sea of humanity
that is India.

In this land did once resound a hymn unceasing
to the one, the primal source and wonder of creation,
the music of many hearts mingling in that one harmony,
and minds, disciplined and dedicated, had poured
their diverse offerings into one sacrificial flame,
and to their chant had awakened
a Mind magnificent, all embracing, all absorbing.
Break open the door to the vision of the sacred flame,
of the spirit's unceasing endeavour—
for we must gather again with bowed heads
on the shore of this vast sea of humanity
that is India.

Behold the sacred fire with its blood-red flame of sorrow
ours is the sorrow and in its flame we must burn within—
so has Fate decreed.
Welcome pain, welcome anguish that makes us one again,
freed of fear, freed of the load of shame!
This agony unbearable shall end
in the spirit's rebirth, vast and boundless,
the night has run its course and the Mother awakes

in her spacious abode
on the shore of this vast sea of humanity
that is India.

Come ye Aryan, come non-Aryan, Hindu, Muslim, come,
come ye English, come ye Christians, welcome every one,
come Brahmin, cleanse your mind and clasp the hand of all,
come ye outcaste, come ye lowly, fling away the load of shame!
Come, one and all, to the Mother's crowning,
the sacred jar is yet to fill,
and all must join that the water be consecrate
on the shore of this vast sea of humanity
that is India.

The original Bengali version, *Bharatatirtha*, was first published in *Gitanjali* (Bengali) 1910. Originally written as a poem it was later set to music by the author and is now included in *Gitabitan* (collection of Tagore's Songs), in which version three stanzas of the original text were dropped. An English translation of this abridged version by Smt. Indira Devi Chaudhurani was published in the Visva-Bharati Quarterly, January 1929 The present translation is of the full and unabridged text. The translator has tried to make it as faithful as possible—that is, to the meaning of the original text. Faithfulness to the beauty and rhythm of the original is beyond the translator's competence.

Three Years From Now

Jawaharlal Nehru

Three years from now we shall celebrate the centenary of the birth of Rabindranath Tagore. I wonder how the young men and women of today think of him, what picture do they have of this great son of India who moulded the thinking and action of the generations that preceded them. I belong to a passing generation who had the high privilege of living through that period when the many-sided light of Tagore illumined our minds and our lives. What was he? — dreamer and poet, singer and artist and musician, playwright and actor, novelist and essayist, educationist and humanist, nationalist and internationalist, philosopher and man of action. Even this brief record of the many-sidedness of his life gives a poor picture of what he was. We have the magic of his words and songs with us and one of these songs has become our beautiful National Anthem, the *Jana Gana Mana.* Succeeding generations will derive inspiration from what he wrote and from the story of his life. They will think of him as one in line with the ancient sages of this land who have come to us from time to time to rejuvenate us and pull us out of our narrow ruts of thought and action. But will they remember his message and act up to his teaching?

For he was, above all, a teacher and a liberator, ever trying to free our minds and our social structure from the shackles that bound them. Intensely Indian, drawing sustenance from the soil and thought and the long past of India, he was truly a world citizen and his nationalism fitted in with the widest internationalism. In him we see the integration of thought and action. In Santiniketan we see his ideas gradually taking shape, leading to the establishment of Visva-Bharati. Near Santiniketan also, Sriniketan became the embodiment of the deep urge he had to face—the fundamental problem of India. Like Gandhiji, he went back to the village, which was the basic fact of life in India. There he tried to experiment with his social policies so as to help the village folk to build a new social order.

As the years passed, his attachment to Sriniketan and the rural reconstruction work there grew. For his idea of India became more and more that of our vast rural population growing in mind and body. He left us much in the realm of thought. But he was no writer or singer living in an ivory tower. He was a man intensely interested in and devoted to the building up of our country and our people. He left us Santiniketan, Visva-Bharati and Sriniketan, children of his mind and the scenes of his activity and the temples where he worshipped.

We shall ever remember his songs and writings, but if we are true to him, we shall carry on his message and see that Santiniketan and Sriniketan flourish.

As Chancellor of Visva-Bharati University, I have opened a Chancellor's Rabindranath Tagore Centenary Fund. This is meant to help in carrying on his work in Santiniketan and Sriniketan, and thus to pay our tribute to him in action and service. I trust that many in India and abroad will contribute to this fund. Let this be one of the ways of our paying homage to Gurudev's memory. But the real homage is for us to remember his message and to help in building up India, as he told us to do in his magnificent language.

From the broadcast by the All India Radio, New Delhi, 8th May 1958, on the occasion of 97th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.—*Ed.*

Maulana Azad as a Man of Letters

Khwaja Ahmad Faruqi

The death of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is much more than the passing away of a great individual; it marks the end of an epoch. Even in his life he had become something of a legend, a stately symbol of a noble era fast vanishing. To study his life is to gain an insight into the sources which have brought about the present resurgence of India and of the East in general.

His role in the achievement of Indian independence is known to all, but his great contribution as a man of letters is not so well known outside the range of the Urdu-reading public. He adorned a splendid period of Urdu literature and has left no literary *descendants; he did not mark a stage in the development of* Urdu literature; he stood alone.

Azad's was an unusual personality. He was extremely precocious in the best sense of the word. He started his paper 'Lisan-us Sidq' (The Voice of Truth) at the age of sixteen. When he met the great poet Maulana Hali in 1904, the latter would not believe that a stripling of fifteen or sixteen could edit a paper so ably The same year he met Maulana Shibli who took him to be the son of the famous Abul Kalam Azad ! At the annual meeting of the Anjuman-i-Himayate Islam (Society for the Defence of Islam) in 1904, when the young editor of 'Lisan-us Sidq' was asked to read a paper on 'The Rational Basis of Religion,' everybody thought he was deputising for the aged and scholarly Azad! Scholarship generally comes with age but to Azad it came at sixteen

Maulana Azad was conscious of his uniqueness, of his standing alone:

> In religion, in literature, in politics, in the highways of thought, in whichever direction I had to go, I had to go alone. On no road could I travel with the caravans of the age.
>
> *Alas I went forth alone into the deserts of Love*!

> In whatever way I set my foot, I left the Age so far behind that when I turned round to look, I could see nothing but the clouds of dust which my own speedy advance had raised:
> *Not that I forsake my fellow-men*
> *But the caravan moves fast; how can I*
> *wait for those whose feet are blistered!*
> My rapid advance raised blisters on my feet, but perhaps my feet also cleared the road of some of the encumbrances which littered it.

Azad was prodigious: a wonder of this or any time. He completed Darse Nizami, a full course in Arabic and Persian, philosophy and history, in four years, which an average student takes ten to fourteen years to complete. He visited Egypt at a time when the influence of leaders like Syed Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (born probably in 1840), Shaikh Muhammad Abdahu (a disciple of the former) and Sa'd Pasha (father of modern Egypt, 1860-1927) was most widely felt throughout Western Asia Thus Azad appeared on the literary scene of India, steeped in the classical traditions of scholarship, with an intelligent grasp of all that the old school had to offer and with a keen awareness of the new. He writes in his introduction to the *Quran*:

> The ancient belongs to me as a legacy from my forefathers, and so far as the modern is concerned I have carved my own way....
> Khizar's way to the spring of life was long and weary. I have quenched my thirst from another spring.

In 1912, Azad published his famous paper, 'Al-Hilal' (The Crescent) which struck a new line in Urdu journalism and made a tremendous impact on the religious, social, political and educational thought of the time. It was a period of great activity. The Indian National Congress was steadily going forward and demanding more and more rights for the Indians and the campaign to annul the partition of Bengal was in full swing. The Muslims, though irritated by its revision in 1911,

were basking like sheep in the sunshine of British patronage. Azad aroused them from slumber: his prose represents the fighting spirit of the age. His sentences are arrayed majestically like a well-disciplined army; his words have the music of a military march. They had the effect of kindling afresh the flame of independence and awakening a passion for truth and candid expression. Through his bold writings in 'Al-Hilal' which soon reached the highest circulation figure, he was able to contribute to the growth of a new, self-reliant spirit among the Indian Muslims, placing them alongside the nationalist forces and providing them with an emotional basis for their participation in the Freedom Movement by finding a new meaning in Islam. He was eminently suited to the task, for he had a firm hold on the past, the present and the future; he was both an Indian and a Muslim, conscious of the great values of the past, keenly aware of contemporary needs, and eager to meet the demands of the new India that was to emerge. He succeeded in evolving a pattern of co-operative living in equality and partnership in the nationalist struggle and in creating a strong urge for Indian emancipation.

This was no mean task. The Indo-Muslim community was in a critical stage of transition. In a renascent India it was faced with many perplexities and responsibilities as the impoverished heir of a rich tradition. It had to prove itself creative and to evolve a sense of compatibility—to learn the art of living and fighting in collaboration with the rest of nationalist India. It had to integrate its role with that of others in the larger complex of diversity and to play its part in bringing about a synthesis within Indian culture. Azad brought the transcendent truths of his faith to bear appropriately on modern conditions and fought admirably against anti-nationalist trends. This he did through 'Al-Hilal' and 'Al-Balagh' (The Message, 1915) by a high level of devoted creativity and dynamism. The majority of the Muslim intelligentsia, feudal and stagnant, were hand in glove with the imperialist forces. Azad by his vehemence, his slashing criticism and by a style which exemplified all the best qualities of

rhetoric attacked its attitude and tried to deliver it from the narrow confines of its outlook. These writings remind one of water forced into a fountain, rising to a great height and making an imposing spectacle. His style is unusual, inimitable—with sounding cadences, splendid figures, elegant classicism, majestic constructions and a wonderful wealth of poetic allusions—all contributing to an over-all vigour, eminently suited to the time and to his purpose.

In 1931, Azad published his *Turjumanul Quran* (Translation and Commentary on the *Quran*), a book which will never drift into a literary backwater. It will live for ever, both because of its new, humanistic interpretation of the *Quran* and of its graceful and vivid style. 'By any standards, it is a masterpiece' and a monument amid the works of Urdu literature. It is the product of a mind which has come to maturity through many stages of development:

> There is no belief in my heart, which has not felt all the thorns of doubt, no conviction in my soul, which has not passed through all the trials of rejection....Whatever I have understood of the *Quran* and in whatever degree I have understood it, after all these years of seeking and searching, I have expounded in these pages.

This timeless book has been dedicated to an ordinary, unknown man, a fact which well illustrates Azad's human qualities:

> It was perhaps in December 1918 when I was interned in Ranchi. I was coming out of the mosque after the Isha prayers when I felt as if somebody was following me. I turned round and saw a man standing there wrapped in a blanket.
>
> 'Do you want to speak to me?'
>
> 'Yes, Sir, I have come a long way to see you'.
>
> 'Wherefrom?'
>
> 'From beyond the Frontier.'
>
> 'When did you come?'

'This evening.' I am a very poor man. I came on foot from Qandahar to Quetta. There I met some merchants who belonged to my country. They gave me a job and sent me to Agra. From there I have come on foot.'

'I am sorry that you have had so much trouble. Why did you do it?'

'Because I wanted you to explain to me some passages in the *Holy Quran*. I have read every line of 'Al-Hilal' and 'Al-Balagh.'

This man stayed several days and then returned suddenly without coming to see me before he left, because he was afraid that I would give him money for the expenses of his return journey, and he did not want to be a burden to me. I am certain that he must have made a great part of the return journey too on foot. I cannot remember his name and I do not know whether he is still living. If my memory had not failed me, I would have dedicated this book to him by name.

Azad's commentary on the opening chapter, 'Sura Al-Fatiha,' is superb, and this opening chapter represents the essence of the *Quran*. Azad has laid special emphasis on the fact that we are all the creation of the One God, 'who cherishes us and sustains us all,' and that the realisation of this fact 'can conquer all man-made differences.' God is one and His beneficence is universal. Therefore whosoever believes in Him and prays to Him will be above every sect, race and community and will belong to one Humanity. 'No matter what the country and what the age, all the prophets sent by God taught the same universal truth for the welfare of mankind.'

His firm belief in Hindu-Muslim unity emanated from this religious conviction. He forcefully expressed this belief in a speech to a special session of the Indian National Congress in 1923:

If an angel were to descend from the clouds today and settle on Delhi's Qutab Minar and proclaim that India can win Swaraj (Self-rule) within two hours provided that India

renounces Hindu-Muslim unity, then I would renounce Swaraj and not unity. Because if Swaraj is delayed that is a loss to India, but if unity is lost that is a loss to humanity.

Space does not permit of an adequate treatment of his speeches, *but some of them deserve to rank among the masterpieces of the* world's rhetorical literature. In addition to the one just quoted, the speech delivered in 1940 before the Indian National Congress and that which he made in Juma Masjid at Delhi in 1948, exhorting Indian Muslims not to abandon the country that held so much of their synthetic cultural achievement, are the most remarkable feats of literary art and practised memory—'careful and assiduous compositions' in the best Ciceronian sense.

Azad did most of his creative work in prison. *Tazkirah* (Autobiography, 1920), *Azad ki Kahani* (The Story of Azad, dictated to Abdur Razzaq Mahihabadi in prison in 1921 and published in April 1958 after Maulana's death), *Turjumanul Quran* (Commentary on the *Quran* seized and burnt by the British Government, which he rewrote like Carlyle) and *Ghubare Khatir** (Burden of the Heart) belong to the category of the great prison literatures of the world. Even some of his best statements owe their origin to his periods of imprisonment as a Satyagrahi. Here is a quotation from his *statment made in* January 1922, before a British Court, which Gandhiji hailed as an eloquent thesis on Nationalism, and an oration 'deserving penal servitude for life':

The iniquities of courts of law constitute an endless list and history has not yet finished singing the elegy of such miscarriages of justice. In that list we observe a holy personage like Jesus, who had to stand in his time before a foreign court and to be convicted even as the worst of criminals. We see also in the same list Socrates, who was sentenced to be poisoned for no other crime than that of being the most truthful person of his age. We meet also the name of that

*This Urdu classic will shortly be published by Sahitya Akademi in devanagari script with a glossary of difficult words in Hindi—*Ed.*

> Florentine martyr of truth, the inventor Galileo.... When I ponder on the great and significant history of the convicts' dock and find that the honour of standing in that place belongs to me today, my soul becomes steeped in thankfulness and praise to God.

The letters of Azad as represented by *Ghubare Khatir* and *Karavane Khayal* (The Caravan of Thought), both published in 1946, have the same spiritual fire as 'Al-Hilal' and 'Al-Balagh' but their style is different. His letters are as beautiful as the colours on the wing of a butterfly, unsurpassed in exquisite delicacy of phrasing and flawless artistry. Here every sentence has blossomed into a flower. They have a warm and engaging touch. They are a sort of poetry in prose—an enchanted island of delight and repose in prison-life. (Azad spent one-seventh of his life in prison). He spun out his letters like a silkworm and nourished them with poetic ideas or autobiographical touches or philosophical abstractions; and they are most wonderfully executed. Here transient moods and moments are exchanged into something at once beautiful and permanent. Judged as a whole these letters are the most decisively individual and the most sublimely personal creation in Urdu literary art.

A story is told of Degas, the famous painter (and a casual sonnet writer), who once complained to his friend Mallarmé, 'I cannot understand it; my poems won't come out, and yet I am full of excellent ideas.' 'My dear Degas,' was Mallarmé's reply, 'poetry is not written with ideas, it is written with words.' Azad too wrote with words (and in this case it was prose in poetic style)—words palpitating with numerous elusive meanings and shades. His letters are like a rainbow—it is impossible to dissect them. Nevertheless we are entranced by their inexplicable charm—an intangible loveliness more enduring than the suffering he experienced in Ahmednagar Jail.

The letters of Azad show just enough of the man to reveal his intellectual activity. It is not only in their style and feeling that

his letters reveal him; it is also in their subject-matter. Most of the letters of *Ghubare Khatir* consist of compressed dramatic narratives, depicted with extraordinary vividness. He turns for a moment to some scene—for example to a little sparrow which he called Moti (Pearl) or to some character (Nehru or Syed Mahmud) and in that moment many philosophical truths are high-lighted. His thoughts ranged from what he called 'egotistic literature' to plants, from reflections upon music to reflections upon tea and upon the conduct of life; but his thought is never commonplace, stale or slipshod. The letters of *Ghubare Khatir* are an escape from the drudgery of prison, a voyage into the realm of the Beautiful—abounding in sentences resplendent with poetic ornaments.

Azad's writings have left a mark on the era. He influenced everybody from Maulana Mahmudul Hasan down to Muhammad Ali, Iqbal, Hasrat and Zakir Husain. He symbolised an age which was full of intense patriotism and steadfast loyalty to a great ideal. The rhetorical eloquence of 'Al-Hilal', the philosophical depth of 'Al-Balagh', the long, rolling, rhythmic style of *Tazkirah*, the brilliance of his commentary on the *Quran*, with its exquisite and thought-provoking digressions, the relish of the fine, personal touch in the refined prose of *Ghubare Khatir*—all this can be traced to his deep scholarship coupled with his sensitive and cultivated spirit. He was a rare force in Urdu; his writings will never cease to impress and to inspire.

Vallathol

V. K. Narayana Menon

Of late Kerala has produced many distinguished sons—statesmen, scholars, civil servants, ambassadors, ministers. But no one understood her joys and her sorrows, her hopes and her aspirations, her past, her present and her future as did Vallathol Narayana Menon, *Mahakavi*, the most illustrious poet of Kerala, who passed away on 13th March 1958. His voice rang true and clear, and it could be heard beyond the frontiers of Kerala and even beyond national barriers, clear and unmistakable, a voice mingling with the song of the world, in praise of God and for the love of man.

Greatness, particularly in the field of creative activity, is a difficult, undefinable word. There are those who have defied men and their ways, forced their will on their unchanging minds, transforming them. There are others who have stood apart and sung the songs of the people in happiness and in sorrow, and passed on. Vallathol was different. He was a true son of the soil. His voice was the voice of the people, a voice welling up from the immemorial past, but as new and contemporary as our newest aspirations. Seldom has a poet so completely identified himself with the destiny of his people. Vallathol is a household word in Kerala, not merely in the homes of scholars and littérateurs, students and lovers of poetry, but everywhere that Malayalam is heard or spoken. A rickshawala would refuse a fare from him on the impulse of a moment; a poor peasant would bring him a gift of vegetables or fruits, not because they could afford such luxuries nor because he was powerful and influential and strode the land like a colossus, but merely because of the love they bore him.

Vallathol was born in 1879 in a little village in the Ponnani taluk of Malabar. Vallathol, the name by which he has come to be known everywhere, is the name of the *tarawad* (the family) he came from. His mother, Kuttipparu Amma, was an enlightened

woman and no mean Sanskrit scholar. His father, Katathot Mullessari Damodaran Elayad, was a great lover of the arts and a wit noted for the brilliance of his repartee. The family was gentle and 'respectable' and steeped in traditional culture. It was not to an English school or university that young Vallathol went for his education. He studied Sanskrit and soon attained a high standard of proficiency in *Kavya*, *Nataka* and *Alankara*. He studied *Tarka* under that fine scholar Kaikkulangara Rama Warrier. When he was thirteen he had already published three small books of poems. Malayalam poetry towards the latter half of the nineteenth century was dominated by poets like Venmani, Naduvam, Sheevolli, Poonthottam, Kathulli Achutha Menon, Kodungallur Kunjikuttan Thampuran. They represented a flowering of the lyrical impulse. Some of them were aristocrats and poetry to them was an intellectual pastime, conceived primarily in the classical mould.

It was natural that Vallathol as a young man looked to them for inspiration. But soon, his individuality began to assert itself. *Tapati Samvaranam*, a narrative poem, established a new key. Then came a Mahakavya, *Chitrayogam*. There was also a masterly translation of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. This early period of Vallathol can be described as his 'classical' period. We see here the work of a conscious craftsman learning his trade and forging his weapon. Then we see a transformation in outlook which coincides with the national awakening. We see him in the forefront of the national struggle with poetry as his weapon. Later on, the political content takes on a new edge. Political freedom is not enough. There should be social and economic justice for the down and out. The last years were spent in translating the *Rig Veda** and they represent in a way a return to the traditional past (though with a new awareness) and the completion of the circle, as it were.

In the prime of his life, at the age of forty-three, Vallathol, as the

*The publication of this remarkable translation in three volumes was made possible by a subsidy from the Sahitya Akademi.—*Ed.*

result of a malady, lost his hearing, an affliction that he carried somewhat lightly. It led to one of his most poignant poems, 'Badhiravilapam,' the Cry of the Deaf. A significant poem of the period is 'Aniruddhan,' a deeply-felt love poem full of social and political overtones. Then there is the magnificent poem on Gandhiji, 'My Master.' There exists no finer or more moving portrait of the Mahatma. The bulk of Vallathol's many lyrics have been collected in the seven volumes of *Sahitya Manjari*.* The range of his sympathies was immense, considering that he spoke or read no language but Malayalam and Sanskrit, and that all his travels were undertaken fairly late in life. There is the challenging poem, *Magdalana Mariyam*, Mary of Magdala, which deals with a touching incident from the New Testament. He has searched into the Islamic tradition, gone into Buddhist and Jain stories. He has translated Hala's *Sapta Sati* from Prakrit. All these are in the nature of a search for a wide humanity, for the unity that underlies the human spirit everywhere.

Late in life Vallathol travelled widely—in Northern India, in Malaya, in Burma, to the Soviet Union, to China. Some of the tours were undertaken to raise funds for the 'Kerala Kalamandalam,' the School of Dance that he founded and directed till his last days. Kathakali was one of his consuming passions. To save the great art from extinction, to encourage young dancers to take it up as an honourable profession, to give it pride of place among India's many dance forms—these were his ideals. He was a connoisseur and critic who understood all the art and most of the science of this exacting dance form. Kalamandalam today is a standing monument to his enthusiasm and to the many sacrifices he made so that Kathakali may live and prosper.

With the passing away of Vallathol, another era in the story of Malayalam poetry comes to an end. He was one of a trinity of which Kumaran Asan and Ullur Parameswara Iyer were the other two. They represented the first modern phase of

*A selection of Vallathol's poems has been made and translated into Hindi under the auspices of the Sahitya Akademi and will soon be published.—*Ed.*

Malayalam letters. But Kerala is a fertile spot. Vallathol has left his imprint everywhere and his was a life that younger generations will and should emulate.

It is well known that poetry is untranslatable, that almost everything that gives it its unique flavour evaporates in the process. Nevertheless, a discerning ear may catch a few faint echoes of the original grandeur in the following excerpts from the English translation of his poem on Mary Magdalene.* Inevitably the verses quoted are torn from the text and begin with Mary's conversion.

At last the truth dawned on her: all those steps
By which she'd slowly climbed from dreariest depths
To her resplendent mansion, were not built
Of glinting sapphires but of foul mud blocks.
Her gay pavilion, all for pleasure made,
With stately turrets pricking the autumn moon
Seemed now a hideous haunt of murky shades.
Within each fine-wrought door that swung ajar
She saw hell yawn with avid gaping jaws.
Where beds their silken invitation spread,
Instead of glinting silks and down of swans
She saw a bristling crop of shards and spikes.
And like a demon's disembodied laugh
Her parrot in its glistering golden cage
Echoed her misery with raucous mirth—
"Here's silver deniers, Mistress, ten times ten."

O God, where could she flee? And was there none
To lift her burden? All disconsolate,
Child-like, she cried. Weep, woman: Mary, weep:
"The Lord alone consoleth them that mourn."
Those lotus eyes that often for their sport
Had wrung the hearts of sternest warriors
Now welled in holy flood, to purify

*Published by Meridian Books Limited, London.

Her sin-affrighted soul. To Jesus now,
All other refuge gone, she fainting turned.
"Come, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden
And I will give you rest." What other words,
Who else but He could sanctuary provide,
For her who bore a mountain-load of sin? . . . .

Thus purified
Into the house she stepped, the longed-for haven.
Then Simon's face, as she appeared, grew black.
A strumpet, only fit to be showered with stones,
Coolly to violate his exalted hearth?
Yet, as if held within some powerful bond,
The man's tongue stirred not in unseemly speech.
Alas, beneath the pomp of false noblesse
What gulfs of darkness lie! . .

And Simon watched—the righteous one, so swift
To cry abhorrence at mere hint of wrong—
Watched while a wanton woman with her tears
Bathed the two holy feet he'd left unlaved
Then saw how meekly with her silken tress
She dried them from the sweet flood of her tears,
And then most soft caressed them with her lips
Setting on each a yielding coral seal
Woman, most hallowed glows thy face! Today
Thy kiss is well-bestowed! . . . .

Seeing the host's disdain, the gentle Lord,
Friend of the outcast, gave a brief sweet smile
Outrivalling the moonbeam's milky hue
Then those around in gaping wonder saw
The Lord bathed in a fallen woman's love
And soon the fragrance of that holy act
Rose to the furthest stars.

Modernism and Indian Literature

Umashankar Joshi

Now the door has opened to the West
and gifts in hand they beckon and come—
they will give and take, meet and bring together,
none shall be turned away
from the shore of this vast sea of humanity
that is India.

It was Rabindranath Tagore who described in these words his vision of the predicament in which India found herself when faced with the fact of Western civilization, after a long spell of isolation Never before, perhaps, was India exposed to such a tremendous and aggressively all-pervading influence Political subjugation and economic exploitation notwithstanding, many were the gifts that the West brought to us, and among them the upsurge of an intellectual ferment and the consequent efflorescence of Indian literature could be counted as the most treasured

The impact of the egalitarian ideals of the West on a closed and stratified society was bound to be far-reaching in its results The Indian leaders began to advocate educational and social reforms The evils inherent in the caste-system and its inadequacy as a social organization in the new context became manifest The need for the Western-type of education, which inculcated the spirit of critical inquiry and opened out new realms of science, was deeply felt. Evidently, a renaissance was round the corner The first to benefit from it was literature. The printing press had already been installed in various parts of the country, text books on a variety of subjects were published, translations began to appear and several periodicals in Indian languages came into existence.

If we examine the literary output of a hundred years ago, the first thing that strikes our attention is the emergence of prose as a potent vehicle of expression. Prose had been sadly neglected

in the past. With India's coming on the periphery of the industrial civilization and the consequent increase in mobility, communicational needs increased considerably and prose was developed to meet these new needs. The essay (*nibandha* or *prabandha*) was the most popular form for a long time. As late as 1874, Chipalunkar chose to call his monthly 'Nibandhamala'

But prose came to be employed very soon for avowedly artistic purposes. Western art forms were borrowed and the novel was naturally the most popular one. Fiction of all sorts was written, wild romances, exciting time-killers, detective stories, etc. But there were also serious attempts at writing historical novels, social novels and socio-philosophical or epic novels. By the sixties of the last century Bankim Chandra had successfully planted the novel form in the Indian soil In my own language, Gujarati, *Karan Ghelo*, a historical novel, destined to become a classic, appeared as early as 1866, and the first part of *Saraswatichandra*, the masterpiece of modern Gujarati, appeared in 1887, when Gujarati prose was as old or as young as its writer himself. In Marathi the novels of Hari Narayan Apte came out by about the same period

The first plays that were written were after the Western model. A Shakespeare Katha-samaj was founded in Bombay and Parsi theatrical companies staged plays both in Gujarati and Hindustani The Marathi stage developed a predilection in favour of music But on the whole, if any language, apart from Bengali, was successful in building up a robust stage tradition, it was Marathi. The plays of the great Marathi poet, Gadkari, are, like those of D L. Roy, good literature as well.

When we look at all the poetry that came to be written by about the middle of the nineteenth century, it evokes a staggering sense of novelty. there are new metres, new shapes, new themes. The only recognisable old form is the *pada*—the song. The

short poem—*laghukavya*—has come into vogue. For the first time poets sing uninhibitedly of personal love. Even in the depiction of Nature, what is outstandingly enjoyable is the colour lent by the personal mood of the poet.

The focal point of the Indian Renaissance is perhaps 1857, the year of two great events, the attempt at overthrowing foreign rule and the founding of Universities at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The patriotism of the University men was directed into more sound and constructive channels. They were not completely swept away by the West as the preceding generation of reformers had been. Thanks to the teaching of ancient classics, their sense of self-respect was rehabilitated and the visionaries amongst them dreamt of a synthesis of all that was best in the East and the West. A period of consolidation of the cultural gains began as the first graduates came out from the Universities. The essay ceases to be amateurish and develops a personal and contemplative tone Poetry comes into its own. It ceases to be mere versification and throbs with artistic vitality till at last the Western lyric gains currency as a genre. The novel and the drama are cultivated not merely with a view to entertaining but with a high seriousness of mind. There was a hectic literary activity all over India Bengali led Michael Madhusudan Dutta introduced the blank verse and wrote an epic in the Western way. He also introduced the sonnet into Bengali. The renascent forces brought about a period of rich literary harvesting Bengali with her Bankim Chandra, Michael Madhusudan and Tagore garnered great literary treasures during this period. The period of harvesting varies from language to language. In Gujarati Divatia had set by 1887 the Western form of lyric firmly in the soil by imitating and sometimes translating from Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury*. B. M. Srikanthia's translations from Palgrave into Kannada started appearing in 1919. The literary upsurge was there in almost all the languages. Harvesting depended more or less on the accident of the arrival of men of genius. The great Tamil language had to wait till the arrival of that

fiery genius, Subramania Bharati, during the first quarter of the present century to burst into a full-throated song.

POST-RENAISSANCE PERIOD

When one thinks of the growth of modern Indian literature, the whole literary phenomenon appears to be divided into two distinct stages. The first stage—that of the renaissance—comes to an end roughly by about 1930-35. I have described it as the period of harvesting. The second one could be best described, perhaps, as the period of groping. It is the post-1930-35 period that shows, in glaring contrast to the Renaissance period, the signs of modernism, namely, the tendency to divorce itself from the so-called realism and achieve a sort of 'innerness,' a zealous quest for the appropriate form and technique and in particular its search for the right word, the genuinely poetic language.

In the post-1930 period, we find the Indian writer groping for a spiritual content, groping above all for the right forms During the preceding period, all factors conspired, as it were, to great literary achievement The Western art forms came as a windfall to a newly awakened people and matched with the increasing expressional needs of the writers. By 1930, all the Western art forms had been fruitfully employed—almost to the exhaution point In the field of poetry, the epic of the foreign as well as the indigenous type, narrative verse, and the lyric in all its variety—ode, ballad, song, elegy, epigram, dramatic lyric, monologue and sonnet—had been tried On the stage were presented, apart from rehashes from Shakespeare, Molière and others, Puranic plays, historical plays, lyrical plays, social comedies, farces, burlesques and even some sort of tragedies. Biography, autobiography, the sketch, the portrait, diaries, journals and travelogues were written with quite a good measure of success. The short story was comparatively a late arrival, but the genre was exploited in all its known varieties. There were stories of plot, incident, character, atmosphere and psychology. By the time the Renaissance forces are exhausted, we find that many of the characteristic art forms and techniques that had

served the period magnificently were getting trite from overuse or abuse.

The ideological climate had also changed. The nationalistic upsurge assumed a dynamic character under the leadership of Gandhiji and there was a great widening of sympathies. Attention was focussed on village life. Although there had been an accent on realism all through the Renaissance period, on the whole it was a period of idealistic visionaries But by 1930, it had become increasingly impossible for the writers to dream their way out of reality. Then came Marxism, giving an edge to the sense of reality. The mid-thirties witnessed the rise of humanistic and progressive tendencies. The Gandhian humanistic influence yielded lush literary fruits wherever the needs of the age coincided with the emotional needs of the poets, quite a good number of whom were active participants in the national struggle Progressivism weaned the writers from romanticism and for a time the *kokil*, the moon and the stars were tabooed and the mill-chimney, the outcaste and the prostitute were heavily leaned upon for poetic sustenance It is only in Urdu and Hindi that progressivism inspired some narrative fiction of note

Realism, the chosen intellectual mode of the scientific age, has had a very interesting and chequered career in Indian literature Realism in the age of science means the apotheosis of the small facts of life—of the everyday life of man The great critic Taine said that even poetry was made up of 'the small facts of emotion.' Realism was there in the form of social awareness from the beginning of the modern period. Often it gives place to naturalism as in Sarat Chandra, in whose work, I am afraid, there is not much that shows a firm grip over realism. Just look at the lover-heroes of Sarat Chandra. They rarely betray awareness of the problems of livelihood. In contrast one is reminded of how Tolstoy devotes a whole chapter to Vronsky's shutting himself up in his study to look into his accounts. The return to the village, far from encouraging the realistic tendency, sometimes ended in escapist sentimentalism. The awareness of social

compulsions made realism turn literature into a branch of social sciences. Of late the preoccupation with social consciousness has had a sterilizing effect on creative writing till at last realism was found outmoded. However, I must add here that the realistic vein has been exploited by our novelists with quite a good measure of success during the past decade or so. I am referring to the recent crop of regional novels in most of our languages.

The researches of Freud had already exposed the limitations of realism by pointing out that man's nature was like an iceberg, of which only a small part was visible on the surface. The invisible part, the part which was submerged, namely, the subconscious, was equally if not more important The knowledge of the submerged nature was bound to modify our account of the visible part as well. The external reality was not the whole truth. The writer must get at what Rimbaud called 'the inner reality'

The known literary forms, realistic and naturalistic fiction for example, were not adequate to meet this new demand of presenting the inner reality. The short story with its well-trimmed plot, having a beginning, a middle and an end, was found to be too limited and cocksure a form Think also of the post-1930 poets, whose keen sensibility made them experience the full impact of world forces They felt the frustrations and the uncertain destiny of man and shared the anxiety of the atomic age Even if the current lyrical forms had not been rendered inefficacious by too much use, formal lyricism did not go well with the new mood. The manner of the folk-song was successfully exploited by the Renaissance poets; now unfortunately it could hardly be employed for purposes other than those of parodying The tapping of the medieval mystic vein had enriched our lyrical treasures; now almost all such attempts jar. The conscientious contemporary writer is faced with the great task of discovering a literary form which would perfectly coincide with his artistic need.

What forms, what techniques would serve the contemporary writer's purpose? He must grope and find out for himself. Lucky the Renaissance writer who had at his disposal literary forms tried by several generations of Westerners. The contemporary writer, it might be suggested, could very well avail himself of the stream-of-consciousness novel *à la* Proust and the symbolic poem *à la* Mallarmé or Rilke as useful forms. But the difficulty in his case is that these Western modes are dictated by the peculiar inner needs of the writers in question and the contemporary Indian writer would not be well advised to borrow them, as easily as his predecessors borrowed the ode or the sonnet or the social novel for example. The facts of the contemporary life, throbbing around him, may not readily fall into the mould he would so facilely borrow. He must struggle and evolve the form that would answer to his need. What is form? It is nothing but, as Allen Tate has aptly described, 'ordered intensification of experience in which a perfect relationship between the poet and his material exists ' Never before, perhaps, had the modern Indian writer to grope for the right form as he has to at the moment.

If we survey the contemporary literary scene, we notice here and there fruitful experimentalism. At once I am reminded of the late Sitaram Mardhekar, who was a high priest of *avant-gardism* in Marathi poetry and fiction. It would be hazardous to indicate what forms would meet the expressional needs in the future. All that I should very much like to emphasise is that the whole question will centre round how the problem of language and, in the case of poetry, that of metre, are tackled by contemporary writers.

Quest For New Techniques

If the quest of the renaissance poets was for the blank verse, that of the poets of the present age of groping is for the free verse. I am aware of the fact that some of our languages have not been able to evolve a blank verse and it would not be possible for them to translate for instance the first book of *Paradise Lost*

with any approximation to the stately rhythms of Milton's grand manner. But some languages like Bengali and Kannada have amply succeeded. Srikanthia's *Ashwatthaman*, cast in the shape of a Greek tragedy, is a *tour de force*, mostly in verse.

As our expressional needs increased on our first coming under the Western influence, some of our languages seemed to have taken recourse to Sanskrit metres But they gave them up sooner or later, except for Malayalam and Gujarati. The latter developed a blank verse by writing run-on verse in some of the Sanskrit metres The Sanskrit metres could not hold their own, perhaps because the modern Indian languages, developed as they were in the medieval period, could not accommodate the Sanskritic pronunciations in their speech-structure.

The quest for the free verse is fraught with great difficulties. A sort of impassioned prose, having a primitive chant akin to the Whitmanic rhythm was used by a great Gujarati poet, Nanalal, since 1899, with a fair measure of success, but all attempts at imitating him have till now ended in puerile affectation. In our days the prose-poem is an established genre. But free verse is not just prose. In the main it is some sort of verse, may be in a variety of metres, and is at perfect liberty to use tags of prose in a metrical line or even by themselves intermittently Much of the so-called free verse in our languages will, on examination, fall into some metrical form or other It is given to a very few artists, gifted with an exquisite ear, to employ the free verse which has the ring of inevitability about it. Free verse aims at being free to form the necessary rhythmic pattern by new combinations. Many a time the poet has to manipulate silences and suggest what we do not consciously know and what we fear to say, and he must be able to draw upon all resources at his command.

If rhythm is the bow, word is the arrow. The creative writer is called upon to replenish and integrate the language. He

has to create, so to say, 'a language of perfect elasticity, adapted to follow up the most secret windings of the spirit, and to reach beyond the borderline where the unconscious passes into consciousness.' Words have not merely their dictionary meaning but also a 'colour' meaning, according to Rimbaud. Their 'association interior meaning' has to be exploited. Tagore's *Phagun legechhe bane bane* evokes by sound-association the image of fire (*agun*) and the red *palasha* flower; the flaming of the forest is at once visible to our mental eye. Mardhekar utilizes *Arunodaya jhala* with a cunning twist, *Giranodaya jhala*. *Girani* in Marathi means 'the mill' and by suggesting that the dawn of the new age is heralded by the whistle of the mill-chimney the poet juxtaposes the sublime and the sordid.

Bengali took to the use of current speech-forms long back. Malayalam has gradually moved away from the *Manipravalam* Telugu has recently been exploiting colloquialisms and even slang. The appearance of the poetic drama presupposes all such changes, and let us hope that this form, the real test of poetic talent (*natakantam kavitvam*), will be cultivated in our literature. I know, some of our languages have some masterly one-act plays to their credit

LANGUAGE AND TRADITION

I should like to refer to one of the socio-cultural phenomena of our age with which we writers are intimately concerned As literacy increased during the past one hundred years and the language-reading series set the norms of each language, a part of the expressional equipment of the language has gradually fallen out of use. Let me illustrate the point. Just go to a village and listen to an old woman telling one of the Grandma's stories to her grandchild. Then ask the father to narrate the same tale. You will observe that the illiterate grandmother exploits the resources of the language far more. The language of her literate son appears comparatively flat. Of course the language he uses has been enriched by liberal borrowings from Sanskrit and by numberless anglicisms. I am aware of the fact that this

is how change in languages takes place as part of the general cultural flux. Such changes register the change that has taken place in the speakers. But it might perhaps be helpful to be conscious of this phenomenon. Panini listed more than two thousand verbs, even though literary Sanskrit used only a fraction thereof. Perhaps Marathi is the only Indian language which uses the largest number of verbs. Hindi, which has emerged as a literary language from *Khari Boli* (due to just an accident) during the modern period, faces the problem of tapping all the resources at hand, perhaps more than any other language. Would it not be far better for it to draw upon the verbal images from the sister dialects of the vast 'Hindi'-area and build up its communicational capacity rather than draw profusely from Sanskrit? The verbal images, borrowed from Sanskrit, fail to establish sound communicational links and reduce the speakers to using a language as if it were already a dead language As far as Hindi is concerned, dramatic works having characters drawn from the various dialect-speaking areas and novels like *Maila Anchal** would, I think, contribute a lot to the enriching of the language.

The expressional needs of a gradually industrialising society are bound to undergo a change The modern speaker experiences a sort of emotional blankness with respect to certain aspects of the traditional life of the community and this accounts for his not using the verbal images connected with those aspects Eventually, those verbal images will get out of use and wither away

This takes us to the consideration of the larger question of the importance and role of tradition. Alberto Moravia touched this point in his address at the P E.N Congress in Japan last September. He said, 'the cultural and literary influence of this process (of the industrial revolution) has had both a positive and negative side. Industrially much is achieved under European auspices, but the indigeneous culture arrives in the effort of

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*A Hindi novel by Phaniswara Nath 'Renu,' Rajkamal Prakashan, Delhi, 1954

absorbing European things, at a standstill.' Stephen Spender tried to indicate where the trouble with eastern writers lay. He said: 'The great contribution of Europe is that Europe has in the art developed forms of art which can always keep pace with social and historic developments. The history of European art and literature is a series of transformations, of the whole of history or as much of history as is digestible by the intellect and the soul into the symbolic terms of art and yet at the same time being able to relate the contemporary living form to the traditional. That is the great achievement of European artists, to take material of contemporary living life, transform it into an art, which is always related to the traditions of the past and this is what the whole of modern movement in poetry in Europe, for instance, is about. It is the meaning of Rimbaud's, it is the meaning of T. S Eliot's, it is the meaning of all their work and of all their critical theory. It seems to me that in the eastern part of the world, from the examples I have seen, there is a great danger of there being a revolution without transformation, that is to say the whole of the past forms being rejected and a disastrous kind of modernism which we have also had in Europe under the name of movements like Futurism being introduced which has no relation to the past whatever. It seems to me that at a conference like this, we should point to the danger. This is what we from the West can do; we can point to the danger with such developments '

This warning against 'a disastrous kind of modernism' which snapped all connection with art-tradition is quite timely indeed, and we would do well to pay heed to it. Let us hope that those of us who are busy at what Valéry describes as the 'veritable research laboratories of letters,' will succeed in arriving at a sort of 'revolutionary traditionalism.' Often have I asked myself, how is it that while Indian music and Indian dance have even now so much indigenous about them, Indian literature has nothing which would be outside the European pattern, not even some form like the Japanese Haiku or Tanka which have more or less survived the impact of the West?

A CONTINENTAL OUTLOOK

Criticism would render great service in connection with such problems. We have book-reviewing done in dailies, weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies. But on the whole, it is, to say the least, far from satisfactory The reviewer, not used to spending money on books, seems equally unwilling to spend any time either. It is not often that one comes across criticism which shows evidence of good literary taste and rises to the level of literature. We need criticism which is neither reactionary nor doctrinaire Above all, we need to cultivate a non-provincial, continental outlook, among our critics. They are not to assess the worth of a literary work from the point of view of their own language only but in the perspective of the larger entity called the Indian Literature C. M. Bowra, an Oxford Professor, surveys a whole literary epoch in *The Heritage of Symbolism* and discusses Valéry, Blok, Rilke and other European poets We need the presence amongst us of men of letters who have the necessary equipment—the minimum being an intimate knowledge of several languages—and who have developed the necessary critical tools to discuss and evaluate Indian Literature as it manifests itself in a variety of languages The importance of this can hardly be over-emphasized T. S. Eliot says in his recent book, *On Poetry and Poets*, '..... if the time comes when the term 'European Literature' ceases to have any meaning, then the literature of each of our nations and languages will wither away and perish also '

If some of the work of Rabindranath, Sarat Chandra and Premchand belongs to the vast body of world literature, it is primarily because it succeeded in catching the ear of India, because it has about it the authentic stamp of Indian literature. Let me close by expressing a fervent hope that the present age of groping will lead to a second harvest, that it will mature into an era of fulfilment and contribute to the building up of an Indian literature as a vital limb of world literature.

The Meeting of East and West

Annada Sankar Ray

No one has yet been able to define the East and the West. For the same spiritual ideas prevail on both sides of the imaginary boundary line with the same emphasis on ethical values. None of the great religions recognises any East-West difference other than purely geographical. Then the racial origins point to the same ancestral stocks. And the languages derive from the same or similar roots. Since time immemorial trade routes have been in existence and men have been travelling freely, if slowly, carrying ideas and ideals with their baggage.

As far as I know, the ancients were not East-conscious or West-conscious. They were mainly conscious of civilisation and barbarism. For barbarians they did not have to go outside their own territories. Similarly, the medieval peoples were not East-conscious or West-conscious They were chiefly conscious of religion or irreligion For this they did not have to look outside their own countries Anyone who did not believe in their religion which was *the* religion was irreligious or anti-religious. It is only in comparatively modern times that we hear so much about East and West as more than geographical expressions

It is well known that the newly risen Islamic states of the Middle-East effectively blocked trade routes between India and Europe We on our side did not show much enterprise but Europeans went on seeking an alternative route which they ultimately succeeded in discovering by sea. At the same time they went through a process of rebirth during which Religion was definitely separated from the State, Alchemy from Science, Theology from Philosophy, Divinity from Art With the discovery of a sea route the isolation of India was physically ended but it took three more centuries to end it mentally. By this time European history had marched forward with giant strides. The Renaissance had been followed by the Reformation, the

struggle between the Church and the State, the feud between the King and the Parliament, the conflict between the Colonies and the Home Countries, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and a series of epoch-making movements in philosophy and science and art and literature. It is these achievements which made the Europeans West-conscious and at the same time conscious of their modernity. Thus western civilisation and modern civilisation came to be regarded as synonymous, so that the West became a direction in Time as well as in Space. For all that was progressive or advanced mankind had to look westwards.

During the early years of the nineteenth century far-sighted Indians led by Ram Mohun Roy realised that their country had been isolated not only in space but also in time To bring India in line with the Modern Age they decided upon a western education and to link her with the rest of the world they defied the social ban on sea voyage These two events had great importance in the history of our culture in the nineteenth century. A spirit of humanism entered our thought and found expression in our literature Simultaneously Bengali and other languages entered upon their modern period, which was also their humanist period. They were no longer tied to theology, mythology and scholasticism. No gods and goddesses descended from the skies and played a part in human situations The world revealed by western seers was an intensely human world of individuals striving against odds without a supernatural being suddenly appearing and warding off tragedy. Yet this had been the climate of our literature in the past and, for that matter, of the medieval literature of the western countries as well This change of climate was not so much a western phenomenon as a modern orientation. Poets, led by the great Michael Madhusudan Datta, began to pour new wine into old bottles and it soon became clear that what inspired them was not only the Renaissance spirit of humanism but also the French Revolutionary spirit of Liberty and Equality.

Poetry had been with us for ages. But prose came to us for the first time after a break of more than a thousand years. It had its beginning in polemics for and against religious and social reform. Rapidly it reached maturity. New forms of art such as novels, short stories, essays, *belles lettres* and the modern type of drama swiftly became acclimatised. Great writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee constructed with one hand and created with the other. They were individualists by conviction like their western contemporaries though they gave society more than its due Consciously or unconsciously they accepted individualist values which were apparently western but in fact modern and universal. A younger generation took these for granted, for it had been brought up in the climate of western education and in an urban setting. Urbanisation had been proceeding apace and human relations were changing fast, as in the West, under the pressure of a capitalist economy which, like Aladdin, had found a wonderful lamp in Applied Science Similar circumstances produced similar reactions, so that there was no question of imitation of the West. Naturally there was tremendous dislocation For this the blame was laid at the door of the rulers from the West and their civilisation

Once the walls of isolation were breached ideas and values poured in like light and air Men became conscious of great social wrongs—wrongs which had been allowed to exist for thousands of years without compunction. Reformer after reformer had arisen but had either not uttered a word or protested in vain against such things as the burning of widows, forced widowhood for life and polygamy. This awakening of the human conscience was a noble feature of our nineteenth century literature and much of our prose served the cause of reform. Our reformers challenged the infallibility of the Vedas, the validity of the caste system, the supremacy of the Brahmins, the inhuman practice of untouchability, the subjection of women, the forced marriage of children and the homage paid to the ascetics. Sermons were given, ceremonies were performed and prayers were offered in Bengali and other modern Indian languages,

and religious services were conducted often by non-Brahmins and sometimes by women. The monopoly of Sanskrit and the hereditary priesthood was broken, along with the monopoly of the masculine sex. No wonder that there was a Counter-Reformation headed by priests and ascetics. There was at the same time a set-back to our Renaissance for which a friend of mine has coined the term, Counter-Renaissance. The liberal humanist climate which had appeared after so many centuries was about to vanish before scarcely completing a century. The past was too much with us

The climate that set in was one of tension between the West and the East. Since the West stood for the Modern it was in effect a tension between the modern and the medieval Much of it was due to the discoveries made by German scholars about the Indo-Aryan culture of the ancient period These lent fresh validity to medieval customs and practices Some of our educated men would have willingly reverted to the burning of widows and *kulinism* (polygamy) but for the presence of western norms of conduct The British themselves were in a reactionary mood after 1857 And much of the tension was also due to the discovery made by progressive Indians themselves that there was on the part of the foreign rulers a new determination to hold on to India by backing up every retrogressive element It was no longer an enlightened regime of modern westerners, exploiters though they were It was a pro-communal, pro-conservative, pro-medieval set-up And much of the tension was further due to the systematic destruction of the handicrafts without which our agricultural economy ceased to be viable and our villages liveable Poverty increased and social security decreased Finally, much of the tension could be traced to western education itself It raised high hopes which it could not fulfil The passion for Liberty and Equality which it generated knocked its head in vain against a stone wall The Europeans were opposed to any measure of Liberty and Equality for Indians. Frustrated and disillusioned our passionate patriots turned pastwards They sought to revive the past glory of India and the dying arts and

crafts of the country. Mother, mother goddess and motherland became synonymous and inspired the same mystic devotion. The partition of Bengal touched a hidden spring. There was an overflow of creative energy the like of which had not been seen before. Countless people dedicated themselves to the cause of national self-respect and self-sufficiency, living a life of sacrifice, of *tapasya*. The Swadeshi Movement of Bengal captured the imagination of the rest of India Those were great days in our literature and art

Unfortunately, people could not love their Swadeshi products without at the same time hating all things foreign, including western culture Hatred soon led to boycott and this again to violence. Blood flowed on both sides. The wheel had come full circle. There was now a clamour for a national, as opposed to a western, education But the experiment failed, for we could not reject science and technology and politics and economics and many other branches of knowledge which could only be learnt from the West or from Japan which had been westernised. With such mental reservations there could be no wholesale opposition on the cultural front It slowly dawned on our leaders that they could not escape from the Modern Age which was quite a separate thing from the British Raj The period following the Swadeshi Movement may be roughly described as a period when our writers ranged themselves either on the side of the Country or on the side of the Age That is to say, their minds were either attuned to the spirit of India or to the spirit of the Twentieth Century

When Tagore changed over from one position to the other it was perceptible in his writings In *Gora* the hero, a white man by birth, is accepted into the heart and home of a childless Hindu lady, Anandamayi, who refuses to make any distinction of race or colour or creed, even at the risk of social ostracism. This idea is developed by the poet in his famous poem, 'Bharat Tirtha,' where he speaks of India as the sea-shore of great humanity and invites the English to come and join the rest,

bringing with them their own contribution. In the song which has since become our National Anthem the idea is further developed. Equality of status is given to the East and the West. Both stand beside the throne of India's Lord of Destiny and weave a garland of love. Shortly after this Tagore went abroad, translated some of his poems, received the Nobel Prize for literature and achieved world fame. This event was a fitting reply to Kipling's ballad. 'O East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet'

Great was therefore Tagore's surprise and shock when a few years later Gandhi launched his Non-co-operation Movement—a movement which featured the boycott of western education Those who loved and looked to both found it hard to reconcile their respective positions. Tagore was definitely all-inclusive Like his Anandamayi he accepted Gora without giving up his ancestral faith But he had imperceptibly moved towards the Modern Age from his Swadeshi period, like many other civilisation men of India It was a sign of growth. On the other hand Gandhi drew a line of distinction between western civilisation and modern civilisation In his eyes western civilisation was just as good as eastern civilisation, provided each kept to its own territory But modern civilisation was in his view a wrong turn taken by the West and should be righted in the interest of the West itself In no case should it be extended to the East He wished India to keep clear of the modernised West His was the position of a moral man in an immoral world, a world projected by a materialist-militarist-imperialist philosophy of life It was very nearly the position of Tolstoy But since he was also the political leader of nationalist India it often became difficult to distinguish whether he was at odds with an immoral world or an alien world or a modern world. It might be that he was himself confused. In any case he attacked the underlying philosophical assumptions of the modern West in order to weaken its political and economic stranglehold on the Indian masses

Gandhi had to build up the national morale on a massive scale in order to match steel with steel—the British determination to rule and the Indian determination to be free. The climate that he created was necessarily selfless, ascetic, puritanical, rigid and bare. If life is reduced to such extreme simplicity, and art and literature called upon to line up behind it then there is little scope for artists and writers. Naturally they would not put themselves in a strait-jacket. They too, like India, wished to have their own freedom. Not that they loved their nation's freedom less but they loved their own freedom more And their own freedom included freedom to live a full life, a life accepting all the wealth of the Age they lived in, regardless of national frontiers They went their own way freely taking from the modern West, while remaining true to India

Gradually our intellectuals and artists learnt to reconcile the spirit of the Country with the spirit of the Century. They realised that all that was ancient was not eternal or living or capable of revival They also recognised that much that was modern was modern for both East and West, irrespective of such distinctions They further perceived that the modern was not all dark It had a bright side too, which offered infinite possibilities for the good of humanity while its dark side threatened utter annihilation The Gandhian means, Truth and Non-violence, made a powerful appeal to them, but the Gandhian ends, apart from national independence, they could not whole-heartedly make their own. Now that the country is free the ends reflect the spirit of the times and the means are not entirely opposed to the spirit of Gandhi

The present position can be stated as follows: There is a general admission that India was in need of modernisation It would have come even if the British had not arrived Even the attitude of men of religion has changed. This indicates that even spiritual experience was in need of fresh contribution. The present-day meanings of words

and word-combinations like Ahimsa, Satyagraha and Sarvodaya are not the same as the traditional or the original meanings The forms are old but the contents are new. In order to have a correct appreciation of these contents one has to study Tolstoy, Thoreau and Ruskin rather than ancient Indian masters. This process of pouring new wine into old bottles has its dangers. New reality cannot be grasped in terms of words which represent an old reality. We have to face up to new reality The leaders may be thoroughly acquained with the contents of Ahimsa, Satyagraha and Sarvodaya through a close study of the new masters from the West but their followers in their ignorance are apt to take them amiss and move in a world of unreality Then the slightest touch of reality shatters their day-dreams

Moreover, during the past century and a half we have knowingly or unknowingly adopted and adapted countless new values from the West but we have not taken the trouble to inquire into their origin and development and concomitant factors We should go deeply into the values associated with Democracy and Socialism, for instance, before building up a democratic and socialist order Old foundations have to be re-examined and, if necessary, replaced With the same old mental constructions lying below the surface how can our brave new plans have a fair chance of success?

We still need the West and shall continue to do so mainly for a deep knowledge of the spiritual basis of modernism Modernism is not all Matter This was a misconception of the older generation of our thinkers, and was due to their anxiety to disprove the superiority of the West There is nothing inherently western about modernism because it does not derive from space but time We should consider it on merits. The modern man may be an agnostic or an atheist but he is not necessarily an unspiritual materialist. He is quite capable of laying down his life in experimenting with deadly microbes or exploring outer space in order to know the truth and make it

known to all men. What motivates him is the spiritual conviction that man must know the truth about all things, nothing but the truth, nothing short of it. Then there is a motivating faith that human happiness will be furthered thereby, that human suffering will be reduced, if not eliminated. The modern saint is frequently to be seen in a hospital or a laboratory praying inarticulately with his test-tubes or his surgical instruments to an impersonal God called Science or Humanity A free life, a full life, a happy life are ends which he desires for all men and not for those privileged at birth The modern mind is not coloured by the notion of heredity and its concomitant inequality. All revolutions are traceable to this fundamental shift away from heredity to other notions

Then we need the West not only for the spiritual basis of modernism but also for all that is truly universal there, all that the human spirit has won there by its efforts for the whole of humanity, inclusive of the East It is our human heritage and we must claim it. As a Buddhist priest said to me recently in Japan, 'We do not feel that Sakyamuni was a foreigner to us.' I assured him that the Buddha was as much his as mine No one is a foreigner if he loves and is loved. Nothing is foreign if it is lovable, if it is an outcome of love In Japan I noticed a passionate appreciation of western classical music as in India there is a warm affection for English poetry Personally I am incapable of regarding Tolstoy, Thoreau, Emerson, Lincoln, Shelley, Goethe, Tchekhov and Romain Rolland as foreigners to me, to mention only a few among my kindred spirits. None of us should feel that Shakespeare or Einstein was a foreigner Art and Science may originate at one corner of the world, but like light and air they go everywhere and are welcome The West is rich in light and air

Apart from the modern and the universal even the typically western may have a place in India This has happened in the theatre, in architecture, in household furnishing, in certain items of food and dress. If the idea is to westernise Indian life and art

one may unhesitatingly protest. If, on the other hand, it is to beautify or enrich or strengthen India or to fill up important gaps in her culture one should not reject everything as alien. Even aliens are welcomed and naturalised as citizens. What is western today may be Indianised tomorrow as has so often happened in our history Not the westernisation of India but the Indianisation of many things western is a consummation devoutly to be wished for. The rejuvenation of India cannot be complete without typically western contributions in ideas, values, ways of living, attitudes and racial genes. We are sick and tired of playing the role of an ancient people on the cosmic stage. We want to be a new people with a future that will be greater than the past The next generation will not be morbidly conscious of what is western and what is eastern but take both as we have taken football, cricket and hockey along with the traditional sports of our country such as polo A day will come when our people will rise above East-West consciousness.

Does this mean that India will cease to be herself? Certainly not She has been defined and re-defined throughout the ages. She has outgrown all these definitions like Nature herself In the future definitions of India nothing that is of permanent value will be lost and all that is of permanent value will be gathered from all over the world Conversely, nothing that is not of eternal value will be sacrosanct only because it has lasted ten thousand years The spirit of India is ever new like that of Nature herself Like Nature again she will reject what is merely old and revel in new experiments This being her true self she will continue to be herself

Molière's Plays

Stanislas Ostrorog

Molière, who was born in 1622 and died in 1673 and whose real name was Poquelin, is one of the two playwrights whose names are always placed first and bracketted together whenever the French drama is thought of. The preference between the two will always be personal, and perhaps even national, for the English have always admired Molière to the exclusion of Racine. Molière is not only representative of the French genius in literature, he also belongs to what might be regarded as the most typically French of all the epochs of the history of France, the seventeenth, called the Great Century.

But this is not the whole story. There are some great writers who fully symbolize their countries in literature, as Shakespeare does England, Goethe Germany and Dante Italy. Molière, in spite of his truly French genius, stands for one side of his country and, even in the Great Century, Racine, as typically French as Molière, was a complete contrast and foil to him. These two men are complementary—the one tragic, classical and grave, the other humorous, romantic and even frivolous. These two currents run parallel in French literature. that is why Molière never wrote both tragedies and comedies like Shakespeare, and these two kinds of drama, so far as the seventeenth century is concerned, are shared between Racine and him.

Of course, Molière, too, is serious, sometimes so serious that he makes us think how near to tears laughter can sometimes be. 'O Molière, sad Molière,' wrote Swinburne. It would seem that at times he came almost to feel like Pascal that 'the last act is tragic, however fine the comedy might be in all the rest'

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*Sahitya Akademi is grateful to H. E. Count Stanislas Ostrorog for this Introduction to Moliere and his two plays, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Le Tartuffe* which have been sponsored by the Akademi for translation in al major Indian languages.—*Ed.*

The famous portrait of him by Mignard, preserved at Chantilly, does not show the face of a typical comedian; it is touched by pensiveness and the eyes are full of wonder and wistfulness. His life too was saddened and troubled by the malice and intrigues of rival playwrights, by struggles and illness, and perhaps even by unhappiness, temporary at all events, in marriage. Thus, in one of his most famous comedies, *Le Misanthrope,* he creates almost a tragedy

But in his normal expression and dominant effect he is gay and high-spirited, full of verve and fun, and not infrequently even farcical. He is certainly not shy of the most wildly improbable, as things go in the workaday world in human situations. He has an immense range of humour and it is through this that he achieves that depth and grandeur which made Boileau, the classicist critic, say to Louis XIV, to the surprise of the King, that Molière was the greatest writer of his reign The French Academy, which never received him, atoned for its neglect by placing Molière's bust in its hall of meeting and inscribing underneath

> Rien ne manque à sa gloire, il manquait à la notre. (His glory lacks nothing, ours lacked him)

Molière's comedies have a long line of descent behind them, for the genre goes back ultimately to the Attic comedy of manners as practised by Menander and comes down to modern times through the Latin dramatists, Plautus and Terence Their immediate ancestors were the Italian 'Commedia dell'arte' and its French and Spanish derivatives But Molière, though not afraid even of burlesque, brought a new humanity and natural ness to the old comedy of manners. As La Fontaine puts it

> Nous avons changé de méthode,
> Jodelet n'est plus à la mode
> Et maintenant il ne faut pas
> Quitter la nature d'un pas.*

*We have changed our ways, Jodelet is no longer in fashion And now we do not need to depart from Nature a step.

Mere buffoonery was no longer acceptable. Molière's plays are marked by an amazing insight into human character, deep humanity, and a smiling grip on truth, which have assured for him a permanent place in world literature, comparable by general opinion to Shakespeare's.

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, first performed at Chambord on 14 October 1670, and published in book form in 1670, is one of the most engaging of his works, but it is not one of his 'straight' comedies; it is a ballet comedy, many of which were ordered by the Court This was also the case with *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* Louis XIV in 1670 wished Molière to write a burlesque of Turkish ceremonial in order to satirize the envoy of the Sultan of Turkey who had come to Paris the previous year and had given the impression of looking down upon the pomp and ceremony of the French court This is the accepted view, but at a literary conference held at the College de France in September, 1956, a Turkish professor of literature, Mme. Adile Ayda, who has also published a book in French on Mallarmé put forward a somewhat different interpretation of Louis' motive. She suggested that Louis wanted to counteract the ridicule which he had incurred by overdoing 'Turquerie' in receiving Soliman Agha, the Turkish envoy, whose status and importance he had overestimated

It would seem that Louis was extremely sensitive to the fact that while he maintained an Ambassador in Constantinople, the Sublime Porte did not condescend to have one at Versailles, because Louis XIV was only a king and not an emperor. Piqued by this, Louis withdrew his ambassador, replacing him by a Chargé d'affaires The Sultan sent an envoy, Soliman Agha, to France to seek an explanation. But Louis thought that he was the desired ambassador and gave orders for lavish entertainments with elaborate Turkish ceremonies and trappings—platforms, Turkish foot-stools, divans, coffee, sherbet and such things He himself put on a robe of gold brocade like those worn by the Sultan when he received the envoy. But when he

learnt that Soliman Agha was only the bearer of a letter from the Sultan and a person of no very great importance, he was very angry and would have nothing further to do with him. But the harm had been done and the French people had laughed.

It was to remove the effect of this incident, and to liquidate it, so to say, in chansons, that Louis asked Molière to write his Turkish burlesque. Molière did it with gusto The Turquerie in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* is not only spectacular, it is also boisterous. The mummery and pantomime goes to the length of horseplay in the bastinadoing of poor Jourdain. Loius XIV was not, however, wholly pleased with the play, because there seemed to be a suggestion of his own chagrin in the masquerade and imposition practised on Jourdain. Whether Molière actually had any such intention is not known

But one thing he certainly did To the *opera bouffe* of Turkish mummery he added a wholly different comic theme, the ridiculousness of a tradesman trying to acquire the accomplishments, graces and ways of a nobleman (It should be kept in mind that the word 'bourgeois' in the title of the play does not mean a bourgeois in the contemporary Marxian sense, nor does the word 'gentilhomme' mean a mere gentleman of our days To put it in the Indian parlance, *Bania* for *bourgeois* and *Rais* for *gentilhomme* would come very near the meaning in Molière's usage.)

In those days, when social distinctions and social stratification were much more rigid than at present, the good bourgeois' ambition was not only egregious snobbery, it was much more laughable Naturally, through this weakness, he fell a prey to a crowd of adventurers—musicians, dancers, fencing masters, tailors and other hangers-on of the nobility and even a philosopher, a count, and a marchioness. In respect of his daughter, the bourgeois' ambition threatened tragedy, because he would not allow her to marry the young man she loved since he was not noble. The whole situation was however saved by the

clever young servant of the suitor, who showed great intelligence and aplomb, combined with inventiveness.

The clever servant motif is also an ancient device of the comedy of manners and intrigue, but Molière makes the servants in the play, Covielle, the youth, and Nicole, the girl, rise higher. They are free spirits who see through humbug and solemnity, and remain clear-sighted. While the other characters are engaged in a game of make-believe, and Mme. Jourdain can only bring to bear the cold realism of an honest bourgeoise on it, the servant girl and the menial youth cut through it with their laughter. This treatment of the clever servant device is connected with another moral notion of comedy, the wise fool or child who can see more truly than the most pretentious philosopher. This idea is to be found even in Andersen's tale of the Emperor's New Clothes

In the end everything turns out well and all the lovers, the Count and the Marchioness, the Bourgeois' daughter and her plebeian suitor, the servant youth and the servant girl, are impartially made happy. Still, the play is likely to leave the modern reader with a feeling of moral perplexity, In these days when class-consciousness and class distinctions are disapproved of and social mobility extolled, the full-blooded satirization of a bourgeois' ambition to become a gentleman might itself be taken as an indication of snobbery in Molière.

But his attitude is to be explained by a different interpretation. He was himself of the tradesman class and although lavishly favoured by Louis XIV he never acquired any of the parvenu's self-conscious contempt for his own origins Besides, his own moral outlook was too lofty for that kind of smallness His fun at the expense of the Bourgeois is therefore to be set down to a completely different moral notion held and highly valued in every age and society down to very recent times—the idea of remaining true to the nature and characteristic virtues of the order into which one was born, instead of hankering ineffec-

tively after those of others. It must not be forgotten that in the class-conscious society of olden days the so-called lower classes understood and defended their proper dignity with the same firmness as did the so-called upper classes. As Proust writes even about the middle-class 'In those days people took what was almost a Hindu view of society, which they held to consist of sharply defined castes, so that everyone at his birth found himself called to that station in life which his parents had already occupied.' Thus if he makes the crypto-snob Legrandin unwilling to give to a middle-class family letters of introduction to his aristocratic acquaintances in Normandy, he also adds that the family in no circumstances would have dreamt of making use of them

It was indeed very much akin—this feeling of class dignity—to the sentiment expressed in the famous Sanskrit saying which says that death in one's own dharma (nature) is preferable to the horror of going over to the dharma of others Some such idea was in the mind of Molière

Le Tartuffe is perhaps the most famous comedy in French literature, and certainly it is one of the most successful From the first it drew widespread attention and particularly on account of the controversy which it gave rise to after the private performance of its first three acts before young Louis XIV on 12 May 1664 Without questioning Molière's motives the King thought that his satire of hypocrisy might give offence to religoius sentiment and forbade its public performance It was an influential section of the French clergy, under the leadership of the Archbishop of Paris, who attacked the book as blasphemous

Molière protested strongly against this misrepresentation and tried to get the ban lifted. He sent a number of memorials to the King and published a long letter explaining the nature of the play and his intentions. He even appealed to the Papal Legate in France, Cardinal Chigi, and secured the favourable opinion of some of the French prelates. In the meanwhile, the

play was privately staged under the patronage of Monsieur, the King's brother, and the Great Conde. Once Molière even staged it publicly under a changed name but this provoked an injunction from the Parlement of Paris and a threat of excom munication for those who read or heard it in public or in private from the Archbishop of Paris. But Molière's efforts were ultimately successful and the prohibition was withdrawn on 13 February 1669, five years after it had been imposed.

The play then started on its triumphant career. Its first public performance after the lifting of the ban brought Molière a sum of 2,860 livres, an unprecedented box-office receipt in those days. Since then down to this day there have been something like 2,500 performances of *Le Tartuffe* at the Comédie Française alone and it has always attracted the best talents on the French stage.

In the first performance the title-role was taken by Du Croisy, who was selected by Molière himself for his suitability to the part and who created its stage tradition Since then it has been taken, to mention only recent names, by Sylvain, Lucien Guitry, Louis Jouvet and Fernand Ledoux Dorine, the servant-woman, has been acted even by tragic actresses like Rachel and Clairon and, what is not less interesting; by Madame de Pompadour herself at two amateur performances, after the role had been created for the stage by Madeleine Bejart, Molière's sister-in-law

From the literary side, too, so much has been written and said about *Le Tartuffe* that it has become difficult to recover the original effect and flavour of the play. Every age has read its own interpretation into it, leaving on it a patina of three centuries of criticism and commentary These interpretations have been so diverse that a recent critic has thought it necessary to write a book entitled *Le Tartuffe et ses Avatars*

Le Tartuffe is the story of the first successes and final discomfiture of an adventurer who imposes on people and exploits them by a pretence of devotion and saintliness. This was a living theme in seventeenth century France, as it is in India even today, because this century is a great age of French religious sentiment, beginning with St. François de Sales and St. Vincent de Paul and ending with Madame Guyon, with Pascal and the Jansenists of the Port-Royal in-between. It is also the century of Bossuet and Fenelon The immense prestige and respect which religion enjoyed then made it easy and relatively safe for impostors to exploit it, and there were a large number of them abroad As Molière put it in the preface to the first printed edition of the play.

> Here is a comedy over which a good deal of noise has been made and which has been long persecuted, the people whom it represents have shown clearly that they have more power in France than all those whom till now I have put on the stage. The Marquises, the Précieuses, the cuckolds and the doctors have gently suffered me to represent them and have even pretended to be amused with the rest of the world by the pictures that have been drawn of them; but the hypocrites have not appreciated joking, they were at once scared and they have found it strange that I have had the boldness to make fun of their grimaces and the inclination to run down a vocation with which so many honest persons get mixed up
>
> It is a crime which they cannot forgive in me and they have all armed themselves against my comedy with a terrifying fury They have taken care not to attack it from the side on which they have been wounded, they are too clever for that and they know how to behave only too well to lay bare their inmost heart.
>
> Following their admirable custom, they have covered their own interest with the cause of God, and *Le Tartuffe*, in their view, is a piece that offends piety. From beginning to end it is full of abominations and there is nothing to be found in it which does not deserve the fire

The difference which Molière noted between the reactions of the hypocrites and that of the other characters satirized by him is, of course, perfectly intelligible. The sly noble, the over-ambitious bourgeois, the miser, the betrayed husband, the blue-stocking, the misanthrope wearing his heart on his sleeve and the like are oddities always recognized as the legitimate butt of ridicule. Besides, it is their foibles, neither vice nor self-interest, which lay them open to the attacks of the satirist. The hypocrites, on the other hand, depend for the success of their impostures on remaining undetected, and any attention directed to them threatens their interests People whose livelihood and prosperity are likely to be jeopardized through ridicule are not those who enjoy jokes at their own expense

In *Le Tartuffe* Molière shows himself as one of the great moralists of the seventeenth century, the great century of moral preoccupations in French literature. He is thus the fellow of Pascal, La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyere This moral conception of comedy is made explicit in the memorials to the King, in his letter, and in the preface to the first edition To quote the last·

> 'If the function of the comedy,' says Molière, 'is to correct the vices of men, I do not see why there should be privileged classes for it The latter are much more dangerous in a State than others And the theatre, as we have seen, has great powers for correction The most beautiful flashes of serious morality are most often less powerful than those of satire, and nothing reclaims the greater majority of men more effectually than the picturing of their faults To expose vices to the laughter of the world is a great blow to them People can tolerate reproach easily, but they cannot bear with ridicule. A man may well wish to be wicked but he does not like to be ridiculous'

Here is Molière's theory of comedy in a nutshell, and in the present age it may seem too didactic. But it must be pointed out that the taste in didacticism, as in everything else, changes

and it may become different from age to age. Our age which scoffs at didacticism in respect of personal conduct is one of the most awfully and unhumorously didactic in social behaviour. All our moral sensibility is now concentrated on social injustice and we have very little inclination to face and solve those problems of personal morals which remain as live and urgent today as they ever were.

Although the contemporary preoccupation with social morality has brought about an immense and enviable redress of wrong and suffering, it cannot be said that it has not involved the payment of a price The modern emphasis on social justice has prompted those who have suffered from it or denounced it to shift the blame to other classes, it has made us prone to distribute right and wrong between two opposed orders of society and to make one class all martyrs and the other all villains. It has thus fostered class conflicts and hatreds unparalleled in any former age The stress on personal morality, on the other hand, teaches man to look for evil within himself and develops charity With the social conscience developed far beyond its previous sensitiveness, we can well afford to restore to personal morality some of its one-time importance in literature

But in drawing attention to the moral element in Molière's art, an element which he never forgot, it is not necessary to represent him as a preacher, even as a preacher of the rank of Ecclesiastes or for that matter of La Rochefoucauld He was equally great as an artist and his works, even so professedly didactic a work as *Le Tartuffe*, must be regarded primarily as a work of literary art, although neither it nor any other comedy of Molière was written as an exercise in art for art's sake This conception of art as a self-sufficient activity of the human mind, standing in irreconcilable antithesis to other human interests, is very modern and it would not have been intelligible to any great artist of former times, Aeschylus or Sophocles, Dante or Michelangelo, Shakespeare or Molière. They would have considered the distinction artificial and if anything it has

in actual fact created a gulf between literature and life and also tended to foster the longing for ivory towers.

Molière's success as an artist lies in his mastery of dramatic technique. He was not a writer of literary dramas, but an actor, manager and playwright like Shakespeare. Due to this, his presentation of life on the stage has a force and verisimilitude which purely literary dramatist cannot aspire to.

His success is also due to his humour and commonsense which give to his moral purpose a new appeal and atmosphere and which in spite of the melancholy which affects him when he broods over human destiny constitute the primary quality of his sensibility. His is on the whole a sunny and laughing view of life and in it there is no place for a prig or a prude His Elmire does not fly into a passion at the overtures of Tartuffe, on the contrary she tries to mollify her stepson's indignation by saying:

Ce n'est point mon humeur de faire des éclats,
Une femme as rit de sottises pareilles
Et jamais d'un mari n'en trouble les oreilles *

Dorine, another of Molière's wise humble folks, lightens the business still further by saying to Tartuffe, who pretends to be scandalised by the very innocuous décolleté of her dress,

Mais à convoiter, moi, je ne suis point si prompte,
Et je vous verrais nu du haut jusques en bas
Que toute votre peau ne me tenterait pas.**

*It is not my way to make scenes, a woman laughs at such nonsense and never troubles her husband with it

**The relevant passage reads as follows in Miles Malleson's English rendering.

'TARTUFFE (*indicating the lowness of her bodice*). Clothe yourself, my girl, clothe yourself Cover that nakedness Your bosom. Such a sight is an offence (*He moves suddenly to her and tucks the handkerchief across the top of her bodice.*) A temptation of the flesh. A source of impure thoughts.

DORINE *promptly drops all deference and removes the handkerchief.*

DORINE. My goodness, it doesn't take much to set *you* off, does it? (*She carefully folds the handkerchief*) You *are* susceptible, aren't you? Fancy getting excited as easily as that. *I* don't Oh, no. (*She gives the handkerchief back to* TARTUFFE) Come to think of it, I could see you without a stitch on, and never turn a hair.

This is the authentic ring of high and serious comedy, which in this particular instance depicts a world where a woman does not risk the sword, the noose or the sack at the slightest suspicion of infidelity.

Dorine is one of Molières most famous characters, but she is not simply a *soubrette* of comedy. She is a very real figure of the seventeenth century, a French peasant woman working in a city, and bringing to the complexities of urban life a whiff of the keen air of the fields The freedom with which she speaks to her master and the members of his family reflects the intimacy which existed between master and servant in olden times. Even in that age of rigid class structure of society human beings were less divided by the differences of vocation and environment than they are now

Another incidental theme of *Le Tartuffe* must also be mentioned. It is Molière's plea for a girl's right to marry the man she loves and his implied condemnation of marriages arranged by parents. In this too Molière makes Dorine his mouthpiece When Orgon declares that he is going to marry his daughter to Tartuffe and Mariane's will is paralysed by her habit of obedience to parental authority, it is Dorine who urges rebellion

> Lui dire qu'un coeur n'aime point par au trui,
> Que vous vous marriez pour vous, non pas pour lui,
> Qu'étant celle pour qui se fait toute l'affaire,
> C'est à vous, non lui, que à le mari doit plaire,
> Et que, si son Tartuffe est pour lui si charmant,
> Il le peut épouser sans nul empêchement *

In this one almost hears one of Ibsen's heroines speaking, but without any acerbity

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*Dorine. At least you can open your mouth Tell him that a heart can't love at the bidding of another, that you marry to please yourself, and not him, and it's a matter that concerns you, and you alone. And if he's so much in love with his Tartuffe, he can marry him himself, and good luck to him (Free rendering by Miles Malleson)

Finally, it is necessary to take note of the existence of the question of Molière's philosophy, although it cannot be discussed here. Molière had studied philosophy at college He had reacted against the Aristotelian orthodoxy of his times, but had not been drawn towards the Cartesian system. His inclinations were towards Epicureanism, which he imbibed through Gassendi, whose influence on him was great. But it is not necessary to see in Molière the follower of any philosophical system, although he certainly had a philosophy of life. He had no natural liking for abstractions and the bent of his genius was concrete. His mind was of the type which Pascal described as *esprit de finesse*. I could not end this sketchy introduction to *Le Tartuffe* better than by quoting the fine tribute to Molière by the English philosopher, Samuel Alexander: 'I have tried to express in some measure the gratitude that I feel to a great man, great artist, an inexhaustible spring of wisdom and gaiety and a most dear friend.'

Greek Drama*

H. D. F. Kitto

Greek drama was the creation of one city, Athens. There were three separate forms of drama: tragedy, the satyr-drama (of which little remains), and comedy What they had in common was that each of them was performed, in Athens, only at one time of the year, the annual festivals of Dionysus, and that each combined actors and a chorus: the actors spoke in dramatic verse, the chorus sang in lyric verse and accompanied their singing with dancing The differences between them were that tragedy took its material from traditional myth—only rarely from recent history—and was notably serious; the satyr-drama also took its material from myth, but handled it lightly, even farcically, comedy on the other hand invented its own plots, and took its material from contemporary political or social or intellectual life, and was a hilarious blend of fantasy, burlesque, sophisticated criticism of current life in the city, and cheerful indecency

The origin of tragedy is obscure and not very important, it is probably a mistake to derive it from any single source, such as a specific Dionysiac rite It seems clear that the earliest 'tragedy' was a dramatic choral performance with a histrionic part grafted into it The choral part may have been influenced by the dithyramb, which was a hymn performed by fifty dancers in honour of the nature god Dionysus, but there were other such choral performances unconnected with Dionysus, and at no stage in its development does tragedy seem especially to have chosen Dionysiac subjects The fact that tragedy was made part of a festival of Dionysus does not prove that it had grown out of the

*Among the foreign classics selected by the Sahitya Akademi for translation into all major languages of India are the four Greek plays , *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus, *Antigone* by Sophocles, *Medea* by Euripides and *The Frogs* by Aristophanes We are grateful to Prof Kitto for this excellent introduction written for us through the kind courtesy of the British Council The Introduction will be translated into Indian languages and published with the translated texts of the plays.—*Ed.*

worship of that god; other explanations are possible. But comedy and the satyr-drama certainly had close associations with Dionysus, in his cheerful aspect as wine-god.

It was in 535 B.C. that the new art of tragic drama was incorporated in the Festival by the enlightened ruler Peisistratus. Comedy was given similar official status about fifty years later. At some time between, the satyr-play with its chorus of satyrs—imaginary creatures of the wild, half man and half horse—was combined with tragedy as comic relief. All surviving tragedy belongs to the fifth century, when the tyranny had been abolished and Athens was a full democracy. A few of the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides are extant; none by any other poet. The only complete comedies we now have are by Aristophanes; their dates range from 425 to 388 In addition, four plays by Menander (342-292 B.C.) survive nearly complete.

The fact that the Athenian drama was produced as part of a splendid public festival is extremely important· it does much to explain the plays The audience was very large—about 15,000; it was in effect, though not literally, the whole citizen body of Athens That is to say, it was an audience which was accustomed to meet together, as the sovereign Assembly, to deliberate and decide national policy, an audience therefore which was unified and experienced and mature. Therefore the tragic poet could take for granted a high level of seriousness and intelligence, and the comic poet could revel in political satire and other such topical references, including parody of the tragic poets.

The outward form of tragedy remained strict, with little approach to naturalism; though of course this strictness of form was compatible with great dramatic tension. The number of actors was limited, first one only, then two, then three, though each actor might take more than one part. Dialogue was formal: mainly either long speeches or line-by-line dialogue. Until the time of the decadence the chorus was the centre of the whole

performance, just as its large dancing-floor was the focus of the vast theatre. Although tragedy nearly always took its subject from myth, the poets used the greatest liberty in altering the details of the myth to suit their purpose, just as the comic poets, for their purposes, could turn myth into ridicule.

Though the festival was dedicated to a god, and though gods often participated, visibly or not, in the action of a play, the occasion was not 'religious', if by the word 'religious' we imply a conscious act of worship and adoration in an atmosphere of holiness For obviously, a comedy like *The Frogs* is not religious in this sense On the other hand, tragedy was not secular like most modern drama, it did not deal simply with the problems and conflicts of individuals, even though these might be an important element in the play, nor did it deal with merely social or political problems; even in the *Antigone* much more is at stake than the conflict between private conscience and a King's law It is 'religious' in as much as its background is not contemporary social or political life, but human existence itself, with its unchanging laws and limitations; and the real function of the gods in the plays is to represent dramatically these laws and limitations against which the tragic characters, like Creon, struggle in vain

The *Agamemnon* is not an independent play but the first part of the Orestes-trilogy In it Aeschylus deals with the problem of crime and punishment, a problem which, as he sees it, is governed by two immutable laws that in one way or another, when wrong has been done, there will be a strong reaction against it—an attempt to restore the balance, and that violence, 'hybris', provokes more violence, and must end in chaos The *Agamemnon* presents a whole series of offences, each of which is punished by direct and violent retaliation, and this practice of violent retaliation is shared by men and gods alike To avenge Paris' crime, Agamemnon prepares for war; and this too is the plan of Zeus, father of the gods But Artemis, angry at the prospective bloodshed, demands a sacrifice

which shall ensure that Agamemnon shall pay with his own blood for the blood which he is going to shed in the war. In fact, the gods punish him for doing what they approved of—a hopeless contradiction which is inherent in this crude conception of 'justice', namely, violent retaliation There can be no end to it. So Clytemnestra, an adulteress, murders Agamemnon in revenge for her daughter; and there is a strong hint that had *she* not done it, others might have done, in revenge for the Greeks killed at Troy Aegisthus, a coward and a seducer joins with Clytemnestra in her revenge, and he is continuing a sequence of bloody revenge that began when his father Thyestes seduced his brother's wife, and Atreus in revenge served up to him the flesh of his own children This spirit of bloody revenge is the Curse in the house of Atreus, and it is typified by the Erinyes, the Furies, who in this play are the ministers of the gods too, so much so that when Apollo seeks revenge on Cassandra he causes her to be murdered in this same palace, the scene of so many crimes, a haunt of the Furies The end is chaos, symbolised by Aeschylus, as by Shakespeare too, by regicide, usurpation and tyranny The rest of the trilogy depicts the gradual emergence of more tolerable ideas of Justice among gods and men alike, and finally the re-establishment of order and authority, and the institution of the disinterested Justice of the civilised city-state. So, in this trilogy, does Aeschylus picture the emergence, among mankind, of a conception of justice which is based not on anger and violence but on reason

The underlying thought of the *Antigone* is no less profound. Creon is an honest but narrow-minded King who defies what we should call some of the deepest and most powerful and sacred instincts of humanity; the Greek poet calls them the laws of the gods. Antigone's love for her brother, her loyalty to her family, the natural respect which humanity shows towards the body of a fellow human being, the love which Haemon has for Antigone —all these are things which Creon thinks he can disregard and sweep aside. But his own inhumanity, in the most natural way,

recoils on him: his son and his wife destroy themselves, and Creon is left among the ruins that he has caused. The claims of ordinary humanity are greater than those of any statecraft, and it is wisdom to respect them.

As for the *Medea*, it is natural to take it as a powerful character-study of a passionate woman racked first by love then by hatred. It is much more than this. The day was coming when this vast Athenian audience would go to the vast theatre expecting no more than aesthetic and intellectual enjoyment, but it had not come yet. In fact, if we treat the play as character-study only, it does not make sense, because the intervention of the Sun-god with his magic chariot then becomes no more than an artificial contrivance for ending the play Euripides' drama too contains gods, and often they behave irrationally and cruelly. When Sophocles makes his chorus sing about Aphrodite, how powerful she is, he is looking forward to the end of his play: Haemon, driven mad by his father's treatment of Antigone and of himself, first tries to kill Creon, that is the goddess Aphrodite showing her power Aphrodite is powerful too in the *Medea*, and other such gods in other plays by Euripides What he means is that the nature of Man is, or should be, a blend of contrary instincts—love and purity, passion and reason When the balance is even, all may be well, when, as in the *Medea*, the passions overpower reason, disaster follows Here it is a public more than a personal disaster; Medea indeed suffers, but it is the children, the innocent bride and her father, who are killed Medea herself escapes—in a chariot sent by the Sun-god Untamed Nature is triumphant Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, called Euripides 'the most tragic of the poets,' and it is a reasonable judgment Aeschylus and Sophocles leave us with the feeling that if man shows proper wisdom, caution, moderation, he has a fair chance of a life which is not too unhappy, Euripides portrays unbalanced individuals, like Medea, or, in his war-plays, whole societies, like the Greeks at Troy, who are at the mercy entirely of their own passions and follies, and in consequence bring hopeless ruin both on others and on themselves.

Euripides, though he was only about fifteen years younger than Sophocles, seems to belong to a different age. During the last few decades of the fifth century Greece in general, and Athens in particular, experienced an Age of Reason not unlike that which Western Europe was to experience again in the second half of the seventeenth century—an intellectualist movement in which the most characteristic as well as the noblest figure was Socrates. This new intellectualism, naturally, had results both good and bad; one of the results was that serious religious tragedy died; it cannot survive in a critical, intellectual age. Those Greeks who were chiefly impressed by its bad effects—and Aristophanes was one of them—could say, with some justification, that it made men clever instead of wise, that it replaced religious faith by shallow reasoning, that it made men individualists and weakened the self-discipline and cohesion of the citizen-body. It happened too that in 431 B C a desperate war broke out between Athens and her old rival Sparta It continued almost without interruption for twenty seven years, and ended in the total defeat of Athens During the war, as often happens, public morality degenerated. more and more did violent and vulgar men gain political influence Again, there were those who assigned some of the blame for this degeneration to the intellectuals and their influence; Aristophanes had some sympathy for this point of view

Now, Euripides was nearer to this intellectualist movement than Sophocles Several passages in the *Medea* illustrate it when the Nurse complains that poets and musicians can brighten feasts but not assuage grief, when the chorus discusses whether it is better to have children or not to have them, we feel perhaps that we are listening to an essayist rather than to a dramatist, and some of Medea's speeches remind one of a law-court rather than of the stage. Again, some of his later plays help us to understand why serious tragedy did not survive much longer, for they do not profess to grapple with any of the serious issues of life—as if that were now the business of philosophers—but present instead elegant and sophisticated drama, with a stiffening of

discussion or speculation about this and that. Naturally, dramatic and poetic style were modified accordingly: the intensity of feeling and thought which raised poetry to such heights in Aeschylus and Sophocles has disappeared; elegance, clarity and smoothness are now cultivated.

All this is part of the background of *The Frogs*, one of Aristophanes' most brilliant comedies. It was produced in 405, the year after the deaths of Euripides and Sophocles. The action of the play must be left to explain itself It is very typical of Old Comedy in its high spirits and unlimited fancy, also in its undercurrent of seriousness, for it is impossible not to feel that the poet is gravely concerned for Athens, and would welcome a return to the ideals of the past, now unfashionable The comic treatment of the gods is also typical Heracles, the great legendary hero, who in his lifetime had performed great exploits, including a descent into Hades, is scarcely a dignified figure here; and most remarkable is the treatment of Dionysus, the god in whose honour this very play was being performed—with his Priest sitting in the seat of honour, for Dionysus is represented as a thoroughly stupid theatre-goer, so stupid that he is an enthusiast for Euripides Finally, there is the literary criticism in the burlesque Trial-scene, so shrewd and, on the whole, so impartial The fact that so much detailed criticism of tragedy could form so important a part of a popular comedy shows what an intelligent audience these Athenian poets had

The later history of Greek drama may be dealt with quickly Soon, every Greek city had its theatre, but as regards tragedy, Aristophanes' judgment proved correct it became more and more lifeless, and theatres came to depend more and more on revivals of the classics, with Euripides the favourite Comedy on the other hand remained vigorous, though its character changed: the political element disappeared, it became quieter—a comedy of private life The 'new' comedy of Menander is hardly comic at all—rather an elegant drama, full of delicate character-drawing and wise or witty comments on life, based

on stories of foundlings, long lost children, extravagant young men, and the like. These were the Greek comedies which, a century later, Plautus and Terence adapted for the Roman stage. When Alexander the Great carried Greek civilisation as far as the Indus, the Theatre was an important part of it. What was performed in these theatres we do not know for certain: some classical plays undoubtedly, probably many comedies. But it seems probable that the commonest performances were those of the 'mime' (a short dramatic sketch) and dances. It seems unlikely that the Greek dramatic tradition had any influence on the Indian, but at least it is probable that during the short period when the Macedonian Seleucids ruled part of North-Western India some Greek plays were performed on Indian soil.

Tagore the Playwright *

M. U. Malkani

The poetry of Rabindranath Tagore, which brought him the Nobel Prize in 1913 and put India on the map of modern world literature, is acknowledged to be of a high order, and his novels and short stories too attain a degree of perfection. But his plays are not so well known outside Bengali, nor are they the perfect works of drama they might be expected to be, although the greatness of their subject-matter is indisputable, as I shall show in this estimate of his dramatic writings

It must be borne in mind that the art of drama differs from other branches of literature in this that, unlike poetry and fiction, it is not complete in itself but is a composite art dependent on the art of the theatre for its fullest expression A play is not only meant to be read in the study, but is intended to be performed on the stage, and therefore a play should be well-made from the point of view of stage-craft—in which respect Tagore's plays, to my mind, are mainly deficient

One who has produced Tagore's plays on the stage must have found them particularly wanting in the principles of Time and Place For instance, in *Sacrifice* and *The Waterfall*, the same scene goes on for an hour or two, during which characters keep coming in and going out, with or without reason, when the actual action of the scene is supposed to have taken a few days or more To obviate this confusion, such long scenes have generally to be split up into two or three short ones in order to indicate the passage of time Again, in some plays like *Chitra* and *Sanyasi*, Tagore introduces such a succession of short scenes that the curtain has to be lowered or the stage darkened every few minutes,

*We are glad to publish this article by a distinguished Sindhi writer and critic, not because it throws any new light on Tagore's drama (in fact, some of the interpretations are inadequate) but because it is interesting to know what an intelligent critic, who has read Tagore's plays only in English, thinks of them —*Ed*

and therefore such short scenes have either to be connected or some unimportant ones cut out for the purpose of presentation.

REALISTIC PLAYS

The plays of Tagore naturally fall into three main groups, thematically as well as chronologically The first is the group of realistic plays comprising four short plays published in the volume, *Sacrifice and Other Plays* Of these *Sanyasi* was the first play that Tagore wrote, which contains a succession of short scenes and too many undistinguishable characters—technical flaws which, however, have been explained as depicting the drifting pageant of an Indian road Tagore calls this playlet 'an introduction to the whole of my future work,' which embodies his essential philosophy, 'the joy of attaining the Infinite within the Finite' This philosophy is conveyed by the charming character of Ila, the country girl, through whom Nature teaches the Sanyasi the lesson of not renouncing the world, but living in it and performing his duty

The King and the Queen is a more actable play on the subject of the destruction and futility of war, and therefore is particularly worth performing in the present times of war-neurosis The character of the intrepid Queen revolting against her husband who propounds war is that of a brave modern woman

Sacrifice is dramatically the most powerful of these plays and is a proper one-act play—being written in one scene throughout It centres round the ancient evils of Hinduism. idol-worship and animal sacrifice Raghupati, the bigoted priest, is the strongest character in the play, which Tagore used to enact himself. Aparna, the beggar girl, who through her innocent love and sacrifice for the young disciple Jaising converts thebigoted priest, is a charming waif reminiscent of Browning's Pippa But the conversion and repentance of both the priest and Jaising appear rather too sudden and unconvincing.

Malini, the fourth in the volume is a fairly effective play against Brahminism and the caste-system in Hindu society. Malini is a fine low-caste heroine, less shadowy and more tangible than Ila and Aparna, persecuted by Brahmins and torn between the love of two heroes of different castes, the high and the low.

The special quality of these plays is Tagore's impartiality in arguing the case on both sides of the problems—as strongly for caste-system and animal sacrifice as against—in the manner of Galsworthy

CLASSICAL PLAYS

The second phase in Tagore's dramatic output consists of plays adapted from various episodes, in the *Mahabharata*—that store-house of Indian legend—from many of which Tagore derived universal interpretations

Chitra is his first full-length play—the most lyrical and romantic, and the most widely performed at home as well as abroad It contains love-scenes so charged with passion and sensuous imagery that some early critics condemned the play as obscene It represents the conflict between the ideal of celibacy and conjugal love Arjuna, the *Mahabharata* hero, is under the vow of celibacy, and the fair Chitra is hunting in the forest in male attire, in the manner of Shakespeare's Rosalind When the two meet, all bonds are broken and love takes its own course

Then, there are five classical sketches contained in the volume, *The Fugitive and Other Poems*, of which many readers are unaware The most powerful of these little plays is *Ama and Vinayaka* which reads almost like a modern problem play It deals with the daring theme of Hindu-Muslim unity by marriage Ama, a Hindu girl, loves a brave Muslim youth, and owing to her parents' opposition elopes with him But they are soon caught, and the father kills the lover The character contrast between the ultimately relenting father and the bigoted mother is very striking *Karna and Kunti* is a forceful dialogue between Kunti, the mother

of the Pandava brothers, and her elder illegitimate son, Karna, who fights on the side of the Kauravas against his half-brothers.

Kacha and Devayani is another fairly good dialogue depicting woman's unswerving love as against man's ideal in sacrificing love for duty. Kacha is a celestial youth sent by his people to learn the secret of immortality from Devayani's father. During his sojourn on earth he falls in love with the maiden, but ultimately has to part from her and return to his heavenly abode.

The other two sketches in this collection, *Mother's Prayer* and *Somaka and Ratvik*, are uninteresting mythological pieces with no dramatic qualities

Symbolical Plays

The last phase of Tagore's dramatic writings consists of symbolical plays the mystical inner meaning of some of which is so abstruse as to be obscure to the general reader.

The first of these and the last to be published in a collected volume, *Three Plays*, is *Mukta Dhara* (The Waterfall) which is a highly allegorical representation of the author's passionate belief in the freedom of the spirit as against the organised power of the State and the Machine.

The King of the Dark Chamber is perhaps the most symbolic play of Tagore, the spiritual meaning of which is that the Queen (human being), dissatisfied with the King (God), pursues the Fake King (worldly attractions) in vain, and ultimately finds the True King in the Dark Chamber (her own soul). Although performed in Germany and Paris, this play was a failure on the stage because of its obscure action, capricious constructions and unprovoked songs.

In *The Cycle of Spring* Tagore sees the secret of life in spring and the changing seasons. But it is his weakest play, 'incoherent and chaotic,' with a thin conception and poor execution. Yet it

makes a festival of song and dance, and was the poet's favourite. He had played the blind poet Baul himself, while his nephew Abanindranath, the painter, and other family members and students had acted in it, when it was originally performed at Santiniketan.

Red Oleanders is another allegorical play, in which the free spirit of man, symbolised in the person of a young girl, is pitted against the ruthless power of the machine age. Though never staged in English, it has been very successfully staged in Bengali in recent years.

The *Post Office* is Tagore's most perfect and most dramatic as well as most successful full-length play, written at the height of his creative powers—about the same time as *Gitanjali* * The allegorical story of Amal, the sickly boy, longing for liberation from the prison-bars of his room in which his fond but foolish uncle has confined him, and ultimately finding freedom from bondage in death, is suggestive of the emancipation of the human spirit from earthly fetters The character of the wise Gaeffer (grandfather) —which used to be superbly played by Tagore himself—reminds one of a similar character with the same name in Masefield's *Tragedy of Nan* I wonder by what vagary of criticism Edward Thompson, the poet's biographer in English, says of this straight, well-constructed play that 'its texture is filmy and of the very stuff of dreams,' and styles it as 'a hopeless mush and welter of sentimentalism,' saved from failure by the simplicity and naturalness of its language

Finally, I must say that in spite of technical defects in many of Tagore's plays, their excellence lies in the poetic flights of his imagination and the depth of their philosophic content. Whether his plays represent the present age or the times of the *Mahabharata* the truths of life they convey are applicable to all times and all climes—their appeal is universal.

**Gitanjali* (Bengali) was published in 1910, and *Dak Ghar* (Post Office) in 1912.—*Ed.*

The Aesthetics of Ancient Indian Drama

V. Raghavan

In the realm of philosophy in particular the philosophy of the beautiful, it is Drama that has provided the clue or set the pattern for ancient Indian thought. Discussing the nature of Reality, the well-known thinkers of the monistic school have described it as 'indeterminable' (*anirvacaniya*), in so far as on the substratum of an absolute reality (the *Brahman*) the phenomenal world appears as an empirical experience. To elucidate this the illustration of the stage, along with some others, is pressed into service. The actor and the character he calls up through a dress, speech and acting are clearly not realities of the same order; the roles no doubt deeply affect us so long as they are being played but they are really the creation of the gifted artist. Even so is the greater creation, the play (*lila*) of the Supreme Spirit, says the Vedanta; and the most common imagery in which god is described is the 'Person behind this mysterious drama,' *i.e*, life (*Kapatanataka-sutradhara*)

The analogy of play and drama resolves the knotty problem of understanding the tragedy and evil of life; pain as well as pleasure form legitimate ingredients of drama, equally relishable to the spectator who is equanimous. If only man succeeds in gaining for himself the 'disinterested' spectator's perspective, he then begins to see it all before him as the play (*lila*) of the Supreme Artist The Lord as Supreme Dancer (*Nataraja*) is in his ceaseless cosmic dance in the ebb and flow of whose rhythms universes appear and disappear, the curtain drops and lifts and man is now bound and now blessed.

The Godhead is conceived as the archetype or fountainhead of the true, the good and the beautiful, *Satyam*, *Sivam*, *Sundaram*. All expression of beauty, all that is beautiful in art in its manifold media—poetry, drama, song—is but an aspect or gives a glimmer of the beauty of Godhead. The pursuit of art is thus an aid (*sadhana*) to concentration, contemplation and absorption in

the divine essence, the ineffable bliss of serenity, the poise of peace. Vedanta calls this inner essence of enlightenment and bliss, *ananda* and art, *rasa*. Man is beset with his mundane distractions and preoccupations which form an encrustation obscuring the inner light; art breaks these walls in which the spirit is imprisoned and sets it free to shine in its own innate nature, which is of the form of unsublated reality, unobjectivised consciousness and unalloyed bliss.

The object of Drama, according to Indian aesthetics, is thus not to add to man's confusion by posing fresh problems but to help him transcend the turmoil and attain composure. Accordingly, the ideal of the Indian dramatist shifts from a mere character-study to the evocation of a *rasa* *Rasa* is a key-word of Indian culture; from taste to supreme beatitude, it conveys a world of significance The concept of *rasa* has three phases first, it refers to the emotional states figuring in the themes of plays; second, it is the aesthetic response in the attuned heart of the spectator, and finally it is that same second state becoming one of complete absorption when inner spirit is 'dis-covered.' Whatever the particular emotion underlying a play or a part of it, be it love, anger or pathos, when it strikes a corresponding chord in the spectator's heart and the latter becomes full with the emotion roused, it gives rise to a state of 'relish' or 'delectation' (*asvada*) or a repose of the heart (*visranti*) in which the emotion that occasioned this state of the heart loses its name and there is just a blissful condition; the 'enjoyer', if he may be so called, does not 'enjoy' it, as he would a normal mundane event of happiness like the access of a fortune; there is no worldly reference in it and the ascendence to this state of aesthetic relish is therefore called non-worldly or sublime (*alaukika*) This condition of aesthetic delectation is the realisation of beauty and it is therefore a transcendent value One thus goes out of the theatre with an impression of quiet harmony rather than with a disturbed mind When T. S. Eliot therefore says that the ultimate function of art is 'to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness and reconciliation,' he is voicing the Indian view.

This ideal of effecting a harmonious emotional impression is also responsible for the Indian dramatist eschewing incongruities, discrepancies or idiosyncracies in an individual character and trying all the time to do what is styled as the developing of the *rasa*. For this reason, too, the character as such is not the thing for him but the character as the vehicle of *rasa*. The bringing together of incompatible *rasas* is also to be avoided. Characters, story or plot take a secondary place, in fact, the story is in place not as a story but as a medium of *rasa*. Consequently, each play should have an emotional unity; the unities of time and place are of minor importance; indeed, in the sweep from the earth to heaven and over long passages of time that the Indian imagination takes, these two unities are left far behind

This does not, however, mean that the plot, within its limits, is not properly treated and organised; in Sanskrit dramaturgy, it is insisted that an action should be analysed into its five constituent elements, five stages and five junctures the seed, the continuity, the helpful episodes, major and minor, and the purpose are the five elements, the beginning, the effort, the hope, the assurance, and the success are the five stages; in the appropriate processing of the former through the latter, five junctures of the course of the action of the play are seen: the opening, the progression, the development, the pause and the conclusion. All this mechanics of plot-construction should subserve the end of the emotional factor, the *rasa* in the interests of which some of these elements may be left out. As in character, so in plot, those episodes in the original story which are incongruent are to be eschewed, so that the *rasa* may have a harmonious unfoldment. Even in well-known epic themes, imaginative poets like Kalidasa, keeping themselves within bounds, do effect congenial innovations to improve somewhat upon their source material.

The same ideal of achieving a harmony out of chaos, of producing a restfulness out of disturbance, is also responsible for the avoidance of tragedy in the Sanskrit theatre. The tragic element and its poignant portrayal do, indeed, form part of Sanskrit drama

but there is no 'tragedy' in Sanskrit in the Western sense of the term. The Indian attitude to life, of which drama is born, considers life as but one act in a long series through which man is gradually evolving towards perfection: death is not the end, nor evil: realisation and happiness are the real end. The higher purpose of Sanskrit drama is no doubt the realisation of the aesthetic bliss of *rasa*; but this does not preclude the subordinate purpose of promoting in the spectator the moral consciousness. The brief dictum declares that a *Ramayana* play, for instance, should inculcate the lesson that one should emulate the hero, Rama, not the villain, Ravana. The spectacle of virtue defeated and evil triumphant, which frustrates the soul and makes it callous, should never be held up Nor should the last curtain fall on corpses and the audience depart from the hall as from a cemetery.

It is the example of a heroic character overcoming evil, of character triumphing over degradation, that Sanskrit drama sets as the most befitting theme for this art. The ancient Indian theatre was no doubt rich in varieties of drama—social plays, monologues, farces, operatic and dance compositions—but among all this, the pride of place was given to the heroic type of drama, the *Nataka*, in which an exemplary epic hero and his exploits in the defence of a righteous cause against its opposing demoniac forces are portrayed: in short, imitation of divinity is the highest dramatic activity The theory speaks of four types of heroes, the Sublime, the Impetuous, the Gallant and the Quiet, who figure in the different types of Sanskrit drama; of these the first who is to be featured in the heroic type of play described above, the *Nataka*, is the most exalted type; he is indeed the ideal human character held up as the model.

Along with these epic themes of heroism are the stories of great loves in which also the same heroic characters figure; and in the portrayal of that love, too, Sanskrit drama, as exemplified by the practice of poets like Kalidasa, has its own ideals and standards of refinement and canons of portrayal. Of the two phases of love, union and separation, Sanskrit drama prefers to dwell more

on separation, for it is the intensity of mutual longing in separation that welds the two hearts together; moreover, in the fire of suffering the physical aspect is transcended and love attains a true spiritual quality. A high sense of taste and refinement also characterise the portrayal of the phase of union. Sanskrit canons prohibit such crudities—so dear to the modern drama (particularly the screen) in the West—as scenes of toilet, dressing or rather undressing, getting on a bed, and above all osculation. Similarly, activities like sleeping or eating on the stage are also discountenanced, tedious long portions of the story have to be briefly communicated in interludes and the actual action should concentrate on the portrayal of the parts of the theme which are charged with emotional possibilities. To quote the words of Bharata, the author of the first available treatise on the theatre-arts, what is to be seen actually should be pleasing, elevated and full of feeling: *drsyas tu madhurodara-rasa-bhava-nirantarah* That which is merely spectacular is of inferior attraction, a battle or quarrel, a burning scene,—all these for which modern stage-craft may build an elaborate machinery,—may produce an impression on children and the less developed minds. In one of the earliest plays, the *Svapnavasavadatta*, the story starts with a conflagration in which the heroine is taken to have perished, but the action of the play begins, not with the burning scene, but with the consequences of that event on the minds and hearts of the King, his ministers and others

The ideal and technique of the Sanskrit drama in this respect cannot be better described than in the words of Tolstoy who says in his *What is Art?*, chs. v and xi:

> To evoke in oneself a feeling one has experienced and having evoked it in oneself, then, by movements, lines, colours, sounds, and forms expressed in words so as to transmit that feeling that others may experience the same feeling—this is the activity of art. ....
>
> ...such for instance, as *Hannele*, in which play the author wishes to transmit to the spectators pity for a persecuted girl. To evoke this feeling in the audience by means of art, *the*

> *author should either make one of the characters express this pity in such a way as to infect everyone*, or he should describe the girl's feeling correctly. But he cannot, or will not, do this and chooses another way, more complicated in stage-management but easier for the author. He makes the girl die on the stage and still further to increase the psychological effect on the spectators, he extinguishes the lights in the theatre, leaving the audience in the dark.... *But there is nothing aestheic in such excitement, for there is no infecting of man by man*....(Italics ours).

This ideal of refinement extends to the technique of stage production and action The Indian stage does not aim at impossible realism, but wisely explores the possibilities of expressing the idea through symbolism and convention Elaborate scenic effects and stage paraphernalia which fill the stage-storeroom now were dispensed with Several years ago it was reported in Indian papers that the Sanskrit play, *Sakuntala*, was produced at Melbourn and for the opening scene of the play introducing the hero going in hunt, a most resplendent golden-hued chariot was actually put on the stage Bharata never envisaged anything like this. However resplendent the vehicle and however large the stage, the skill of stage-engineers cannot duplicate Nature or avoid the sense of illusion on which all stage-effect is based At the Paris Opera a huge metal vault goes up and down providing a natural sky for the scenes, and an actual boat sails in! But is the spectacular effect of much artistic value from the point of view of drama as a piece of effective acting or subtle portrayal of fine feelings? However, Bharata thought otherwise and attached little value to such spectacular effects, trusting more the imaginative technique to interpret the theme on his stage.

The emphasis here is, as elsewhere in the Indian approach, on oneself, on the intrinsic rather than the external, the spiritual as against the material and mechanical A park or a hill was imagined as a part of the blank stage and it was to be understood that as a character came round, he or she had come to a certain

scenic background; there were several indications in the dialogue, songs and action which left no room for the scenic background to be missed; the effect of Nature in that scenic background, whether a forest or a hill or a river-side breeze, on the character concerned not only served to draw the attention of the audience to the scenic setting but helped in that unique integration of Nature and man for which Sansikrit drama, such as those of Kalidasa, are famous. This integration of the scene and the action or dialogue removed the need for those long paragraphs of detailed stage-directions in *italics* which one reads in modern plays like those of Shaw. Indeed in its higher reaches, this integration made some aspects of Nature even part of the *dramatis personae.* Personification is the very pith and marrow of Indian mythology and cultural milieu. In action, too, the art of interpretation by poses and gestures was elaborated and set forth in great detail with the help of which an innate artistic process rather than a material external accessory was requisitioned for depicting an action, say, riding a horse or a chariot The actor's pose and the motions of his body as it would have swayed had he been on an actual moving horse and the movements of his hands and arms as they would have been if he was holding the reins—these constitute action and drama and not the bringing on the stage, however commodious it may be, of a horse, real or dummy The actor trained in Bharata's technique will get down or get up the steps on the level ground of the stage, throw flowers or pick them with empty hands and portray every idea and action with an effect the perfection and the full possibilities of which could be realised if one watches closely any authentic survival of this technique in the Kerala Kathakali, Balinese dance and drama, or the Peking Opera.

The idealised and imaginative technique is not confined to the stage and action alone. It comprehends the verbal sphere, the actual field where the poet and dramatist, the composer and the musicians operate. The state of attunement of heart in which the spectator is readily affected by the play is not a thing to be taken for granted. As the gifted commentator Abhinavagupta points

out, there are several obstacles to the spectator becoming responsive and one of the effective aids to prepare his heart is the preliminary music; music was thus employed not only for its initial value, but all through the drama; both song and instrumental background were effectively harnessed to set off the emotional situation. There were songs to usher in characters, to take them out, to bring on a new situation or to reinforce one. As characters walked or engaged themselves in some action, there was the accompaniment of instruments to underline their gait and make the action and dialogue an inevitable blossoming forth from the stream of melody and rhythm

Sanskrit poets were never bothered with controversies about prose dramas and poetic dramas; in fact, when considering the question of literary appeal, the Sanskrit aesthetics make no artificial division into prose or poetry Sanskrit drama is in a mixed style, prose and verse alternating, the latter appearing like the upsurges of the former whenever a higher pointedness is reached in dialogue or feeling The text tends to be highly lyrical When I was a student, a well-known Indian playwright-*cum*-actor who went about as one of the apostles of Indian art renascence, used to make in his lectures a stock-joke about the old type Indian actor singing and dying! But if a sensible modern or Western actor can die in blank or rhymed verse or even in a rhetorical prose declamation, how is the Indian dying in song less realistic?

In all this, the Indian, in fact the whole Far-East and South-East Asian theatre, was very different from the new realistic theatre of the West, under whose impact, the old indigenous technique has all but disappeared, however, there are still forms of the indigenous theatre still surviving in parts of India, which when collated with Greater Indian theatre may yet help to salvage materials necessary for the reconstruction of our own native stage traditions and techniques.

Indian Drama and Stage Today

Assamese Drama

The beginning of the century saw our literary pioneers struggling with the problem of adapting their writing to the challenge of secular humanism from the West. The adaptation was made difficult by the hiatus created by western education between the cultural ideals of the rising middle class and those of the decadent feudal classes. In this tension was born the modern drama with elements of form borrowed from the English dramatic tradition and contents haphazardly selected from the immediate social milieu. In their new zeal the writers completely turned their back on traditional themes and forms. While they were right in rejecting the excessive preoccupation of the traditional stage with the gods and their supernatural exploits, they went to the other extreme of turning their back on everything in the Indian dramatic tradition without carefully examining its potential for survival.

Turning to Assamese drama extant at the turn of the century, one can only deplore now the sad failure of the new writers to make creative use of the old tradition. Sankardev had left a rich heritage of dramatic literature and stage-craft behind him. In the sixteenth century, he had perfected a technique of theatre based on a synthesis of Sanskrit and indigenous traditions suited to the need and the taste of the times. He was credited with having introduced painted scenes in the Assamese stage at a time when even the Shakespearean stage did not have a similar innovation Unfortunately the innovation did not last long and the Sankarite stage in its final shape contained no scenic displays The stage was designed for open performance and for a vast audience. The performance as a whole was known as 'Bhawana' and held within the precincts of the prayer-house (Namghar). Turning their back upon tradition, the English-educated dramatists of the earlier decades took to secular themes and the stage-technique introduced from the West. The *dramatis personae* were chosen from the immediate social milieu, the stage

was constructed realistically and acting was made more human and natural. The new urban stage pushed the old familiar world of Assamese drama to the back-waters of rural life.

The gods having been discarded, men occupied the Assamese stage Some gods like Rama and Krishna still made a stealthy entry, but not before giving up their supernatural paraphernalia. The first Assamese dramatists like Gunabhiram and Hemchandra Barua were concerned with social reform The former wrote *Ram Navami* to advocate widow remarriage and the latter wrote *Kaniar Kirton* to denounce opium-eating This tradition of social criticism was carried faithfully to the subsequent decades by worthy successors like Laxminath Bez Barua and Padmanath Goahain Barua. Both these writers enhanced the scope of the dramatic art and diversified its role Historical and romantic dramas were for the first time introduced to rouse and canalise social emotions to desired ends Bez Barua wrote two of his famous historical dramas, *Chakradhwaj Singh* and *Jaymati Kunwari* in 1915. The latter was a romantic eulogisation of Assamese woman's age-old heroism and the bond of unity between the Assamese and the Naga people It found a permanent place not only in the heart of the Assamese people but also in that of the Nagas. One of the Nagas translated the drama into Ao and adapted it to the Naga open-air stage The drama was reduced to three simple scenes for the purpose This drama is very popular amongst the Aos and even now their women draw inspiration from the character of Jaymati whose chastity and passive resignation to tyranny are idealised all over Assam.

Bez Barua was the father of the romantic movement in dramatic literature, but as Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla has pointed out, his dramas were not stage-successes. The same fate befell the literary dramas of Goahain Barua, although his *Gaobura* deserves mention as the first realistic drama in Assamese. Jyoti Prasad who brought his musical talents along with his histrionic qualities and gift of a romantic imagination to the stage at a time when it lacked them most, was sincere in his efforts to raise the Assa-

these modern stage-craft to the level of an art in the real sense of the term. His zeal to introduce Assamese music on the stage was that of a martyr and in this he had only one rival in Kirti Bardalai who wrote several musical dramas. It was an age of intense patriotism, the message of Satyagraha had touched the heart of the people and there was a vigorous national consciousness in literature. In the fervour of that consciousness, the drama soon became an instrument for sharpening the social and political urge for freedom. About the same time Laxmidhar Sarma wrote his one-act plays and Gangesh Gagai his romantic-patriotic dramas It was the genius of these men which brought the modern tradition into being These youngsters surpassed their elders in their faith in the immense possibility of the dramatic art. The efforts of the elders like Bez Barua, Goahain Barua, Benudhar Rajkhowa, Chandradhar Barua, Rudra Bardalai, Majindar Barua had been diffuse and desultory and had suffered from the lack of direct stage-experience, although they laid the foundation of the literary tradition in drama.

It was in the third decade of this century that the modern drama came to its full glory in Assamese and the stage sprang up in almost every town as well as in many of the rural centres and with it arose a class of amateur dramatic artists The needed dramas were supplied by a galaxy of young writers like Jyoti Prasad, Ganesh Gagai, Prabin Phookan, Nakul Bhuyan, Atul Hazarika, Annada Barua, Sailadhar Rajkhowa, Janardan Thakur, Lakshyadhar Chaudhury, Prasanalal Chaudhury, Kamakhya Thakur, Dulal Barua and others. Dramatic societies grew around these small town theatres, the technique of production was elaborated, acting began to be cultivated as an art and women took the part of female characters. Among those who made their mark in that decade, mention may be made of Indreswar Barthakur, Mitra Dev Mahanta, Jagat Bez Barua and Mujibur Rahman.

Before the new tradition could be stabilised, the World War came and with it descended the heavy hand of repression on the

people. But the artists did not take it lying down. When the voice of the actor was stifled on the stage, it rose on the platform. Lakshyadhar, Jyoti Prasad, Bisnu Rava, Braja Sarma and others joined the soldiers of rebellion to fight war, colonialism and tyranny. They made rebellion their theme, society their stage and people their actors. Jyoti Prasad's *Labhita* is no ordinary drama; it is Forty-two personified. The romantic in them became revolutionary and in Jyoti Prasad's career the apotheosis came in a flash. In his post-war writing, however, the original impulse seems to have flagged. Being a national dramatist, he denounced partyism in literature.

Till the 1942 rebellion, the Assamese drama had served the cultural needs of the petit bourgeosie. The *dramatis personae* of the serious social plays were always from this class, the other classes being occasionally favoured with crumbs. The deeds and exploits of the patriotic kings and nobles of the past were the common themes of their dramas. The post-rebellion mood of the audience, though at first immensely responsive to the patriotic dramas like *Pyoli Phookan* and *Maniram Dewan*, gradually changed to favour plays depicting social realism and the subtle working of human psychology. The dramatic efforts of the period were mainly concentrated on experimental writing to the neglect of the technical aspects of stage-production which remained unorganised. In the meantime the radio drama entered the field and what young dramatic talent was there was diverted from stage-plays proper to radio-acting A flare for one-act plays, radio dramas, musical interludes stood in the way of emergence of the realistic trend in drama that had made itself felt in such plays as *Magribar Ajan by* Sarada Bardalai, *Nimila Anka* by Lakshya Chaudhury, *Taxi-driver* by Durgeswar Barthakur, *Urukha Panja* by Arun Sharma, *Ranga Police* by Ramesh Sarma, *Matir Maram* by A. Barthakur and *Chor* by Basanta Saikia, to mention only a few.

The IPTA movement has failed to make headway in Assam

because its organisers were prone to mix party politics with art. A vast number of melodramas with rare exceptions like *Sikha* by Satya Barua and *Satikar Ban* by Prabin Phookan (which may be called the best amongst the worst) hardly do credit to the Assamese dramatic genius that could produce a Sankardev in the sixteenth century. The initial promise given by Bhupen Hazarika's *Era Batar Sur* at creating a vigorous revival of music in drama was also belied with the latter's migration into the film-world. Bhupen's case is not an exception; other talented stage-artists like Phani Sarma, Girish Chaudhury, Chandra Phookan, Lakshya Chaudhury, Kamal Chaudhury, Sarbeswar Chakravarty, Suresh Goswami, Tilok Duara, Abhoy Duara and others have, after a long and hard struggle to keep alive their art against heavy odds, have migrated to other professions or are condemned to live in poverty The fate of young actresses like Bakul Saikia, Beena Das, Begum, Anupama and Eva Achao can only be imagined, for lack of a professional theatre.

Some young artists like Priya Barua and Parag Chaliha are also trying to revive dance-drama by synthesising old and new traditions, but their success has yet to be assessed The State Sangeet Natak Akadami is making an attempt to build and organise a national theatre in Assam; how far it will succeed will depend on its capacity to enlist the co-operation of the artists of the State as a whole Two other movements that were making independent attempts to build up a national theatre were the IPTA and Open-Air Theatre Group. The former failed to inspire the people on account of its political bias and the latter failed to sustain itself, despite some initial success, for lack of material resources. Thus a tragic situation obtains today in the world of drama in Assam. While the creative talent is frustrated for lack of adequate scope, the potential audience is growing cinema-minded. The stage is struggling for a bare survival. The only ray of light in the gloomy picture is that young amateur groups in every town and village centre are still trying hard to keep the stage alive, while their elders are dreaming of a professional stage and university-trained youths of a renaissance that is no-

where in sight. No one knows what the future will bring.

Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya

BENGALI DRAMA

The history of Bengali drama can be conveniently divided into three periods—early, middle and modern. From 1852, the year in which the first Bengali drama appeared, to the establishment of the first Bengali public stage in 1872 is the early period. During this time Bengali drama developed under the patronage of only a few amateur stages Translations from English and Sanskrit, imitations and experiments were the characteristics of this period, though original talents like those of Ramnarayan Tarkaratna, Michael Madhusudan Dutta and Dinabandhu Mitra were not lacking.

The middle period begins from the date of the establishment of the first public stage in Calcutta in 1872 and extends upto the commencement of the Swadeshi Movement in the first decade of our century During this time the public stage of Calcutta exercised considerable influence on the development of Bengali drama. Representative dramatists of this period, like Girish Chandra Ghose, Amrita Lal Bose, Rajkrisna Ray and Amarendra Dutt were all professional actors or connected in some way with one or other public theatre of Calcutta.

The beginning of the modern period of Bengali drama dates from the Swadeshi Movement, the patriotic upheaval in the first decade of the present century provoked by the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905 Girish Chandra Ghose who had hitherto devoted himself to mythological themes, rarely diverting to topical and social problems, immediately turned his attention to political subjects and wrote within a short period three powerful dramas, entitled *Sirajuddaulla*, *Mir Kasim* and *Chhatrapati*

Sivaji. All of them were proscribed by the British Government on a charge of spreading seditious ideas. Dwijendra Lal Ray, one of the most powerful writers of Bengali drama, whose comedies and farces had been confined to social evils with occasional diversion into the romantic field, found genuine inspiration from the national movement and wrote his three most popular Bengali patriotic dramas, *Pratap Simha, Durgadas* and *Mewar Patan* in rapid succession *

But the fervour of patriotism that characterized the drama of this period was in many respects divorced from reality It was inspired by faith in an abstract idealistic creed remote from any living contact with the country and its people at large. Recent Bengali drama has succeeded in freeing itself from this abstraction between man and humanity, nation and national sentiment and is marked by a different approach towards life. Even the dramas dealing with mythological and historical themes centre round the actual country and its predominant social problems. What distinguished the patriotic dramas of Dwijendra Lal is the perceptible emphasis on Hindu national sentiment as evident in the clash between the Hindu Rajput and Muslim Moghal powers; the historical dramas of the more recent times are free from this narrow sentiment and have the unity of Hindus and Muslims for their theme

Another important point in which the historical dramas of the most recent times differ from those of the earlier period is a change from the contemplative attitude of serene devotion to a study of the conflicts and intricacies of socio-economic life The contemporary Bengali dramatists reveal the influence of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in their concern with the various problems of women, following the spread and development of female education in our country. No less evident is the influence of English dramatists like Galsworthy and George Bernard Shaw in their

*Another dramatist of note was Kshirodprasad Bidyabinod with whose drama, *Alamgir*, Sisir Bhaduri made his first appearance on the stage.—*Ed.*

concern with social injustice and of Sigmund Freud in their analysis of character of men and women.

Some of the best human dramas of Rabindranath Tagore were products of the last two decades of the nineteenth century. But a new chapter in his career as a dramatist opened with the present century. The entire first quarter was covered by his allegorical and symbolic dramas, though apparently mystic in purpose, yet not divorced from human interest. Tagore did not pursue the traditional course of development of the Bengali drama, nor did he have any successors in the line, which was uniquely his own. If we follow the course of Rabindranath's plays, we may feel that after him the Bengali drama has fallen in quality. But this is not, however, true.

The course of the Bengali drama has undergone a remarkable change in ideas and technique during the post-Rabindra period. Even the dramas of Dwijendralal and Kshirodprasad who were highly popular dramatists during the time of Rabindranath are now out of date and have little appeal today. It is not so much a question of deterioration as of a change of outlook It is nothing but the transformation of traditional continuity which is inevitable in the face of new situations in the social background.

The latest Bengali dramas deal with the clash between individual and social interests and the complicated economic problems of the uprooted society. The main interest of the recent Bengali dramas is confined to urban life with its new and pressing problems. The new dramatists are no longer interested in the undisturbed life of the villages, far away from the madding crowd With the progress of industrial life at the cost of the agricultural, social and economic structure of village-life has crumbled and so the Bengali drama today reflects the pulsations of city-life with its various problems Drama is no longer a means of giving us recreation and refreshment but provides serious fare for our cultural and intellectual refinement.

A little probing into this issue will clearly illustrate that the recent Bengali drama is mostly interested in man, irrespective of his social and religious responsibilities. A present-day Bengali dramatist is concerned not with social or religious reforms but with man and the intricate problems and questions that agitate his mind in his day-to-day struggle for existence.

Even the mythological dramas of the day, as illustrated in the works of Manmatha Ray, convey this modern sentiment. Manmatha Ray links the earlier period of mythological drama with the new age; his plays are without the overt moral lessons of the earlier period, but embody their verve and vitality and reveal the psychological understanding in a contemporary idiom. Let us take the case of his *Karagar* (Prison) It is a drama based on the sufferings of Devaki and Vasudeva at the hands of Kamsa It reflects the sufferings and pathos of the Indian spirit under the crushing weight of foreign atrocity. Even his *Savitri* unfolds the internal conflict of humanity and is thus typical of modern sensibility. The drama, *Chand Sadagar*, expresses the modern cynical attitude towards divine personalities Manmatha Ray has also composed some historical and romantic dramas, which are infused with modern and progressive outlook. Credit goes to him for writing a number of one-act plays on common incidents of day-to-day Bengali life, but as he has used here the technique of his longer dramas, they have failed to achieve any high literary merit.

Another important figure in contemporary Bengali drama is Sachindranath Sen Gupta who has earned fame by the depth and novelty of his themes and their expression. His historical dramas bear witness to his modern outlook. His *Sirajuddaulla* puts special emphasis on the ideal of Hindu-Muslim unity. *Gairik Pataka*, a theme borrowed from the life of Sivaji, is based on the modern ideal of patriotism. *Dhatri Panna* takes its cue from the popular Rajput tales and beautifully depicts the dramatic conflict implicit in the story. The social dramas of Sachindranath are an attempt to give special colour to the

varied problems of present-day life, both individual and domestic.

In recent times, Mahendra Gupta is one of those who have earned popularity by writing historical dramas. Like Sachindranath he is also associated with the professional stage of Calcutta. His *Tipu Sultan* and *Maharaj Nanda Kumar* are inspired by lofty ideas of patriotism as well as a resentful attitude towards foreign oppression.

Bidhayak Bhattacharyya is well known for his social dramas based on urban life The urban society, it is true, has not yet been able to take a definite shape in Bengal No wonder, therefore, the social problems dealt with in his dramas are not articulate and lack in the requisite depth. Thus his *Matir Ghar* is only an expression of the isolated problems of an aristocratic family—it fails to reflect the general position of the urban society as a whole. His *Megha-Mukti* also makes a pointed reference to the same truth In his more recent dramas he has dived deeper into the economic problems of the middle class urban life with accurate analysis and keen observation

Pramathnath Bisi has confined his creation only to social dramas. But instead of revealing deeper and more serious social problems, he merely points out the ills and contradictions of our life with sharp and sensitive satire He is the most ruthless critic of our modern life and his method of criticism of human character may be conveniently called Shavian

Tarasankar Bandyopadhyaya,* Saradindu Bandyopadhyaya and Manoj Basu who have earned wide reputation as novelists have also written some plays, but though these plays have not excelled their fame as novelists, they successfully analyse the various aspects of the socio-economic problems of the life of

*Tarasankar Bandyopadhyaya is the leading novelist of Bengal today. He has also written several dramas, of which *Dui Purush* is the best-known. —*Ed*

Bengal. Rabindra Maitra's *Manmayee Girls' School* and Jaladhar Chattopadhyaya's *Ritimata Natak* have attained great popularity.

With the partition of Bengal in 1947 and the resultant socio-economic ruin of the people of East Bengal, Bengali dramas have found more realistic themes to deal with. In some of the latest Bengali dramas the dark side of this picture has been depicted with its grim details They have earned popularity by realistic treatment, keenness of feeling and sublimity of pathos. *Nutan Ihudi* by Salil Sen is a notable representative of this type. Among other plays of note mention might be made of Tarun Roy's *Dhritrashtra* and *Rupali Chand* and Chhabi Banerji's *Kiranir Jiban*.

In the course of the last quarter of the century the Bengali stage has undergone considerable change as far as its equipment is concerned Revolving stage with its elaborate electrical arrangements has been introduced and the dramatists of today have to write their plays according to the demands of these modern stages As a result three-act plays in place of five-act ones of the last century have become the fashion of the day The technique of acting on these sets has undergone remarkable change. Sisir Kumar Bhaduri, the most talented actor of this century, deviated considerably from the traditional way established by Girish Chandra in the last century and introduced a way of his own which easily received popular applause.

In recent times, the drama has become the object of genuine interest for a large section of the people of Bengal. A movement for the all-round improvement of the stage and the drama has started and with this end in view a number of institutions have grown up in Calcutta. They are: Indian People's Theatre Association, Jatiya Natya Parishad, Bahurupi, Biswaroopa Natya Unnayan Parikalpana, Children's Little Theatre, etc. The public are also taking keen interest in the performances which are being held by these institutions from time to time. The establishment of a Sangeet Natak Akadami by the Govern-

ment of West Bengal should prove a source of encouragement for the people interested in the improvement of the Bengali Stage.

Asutosh Bhattacharyya

GUJARATI DRAMA

Gujarati drama was born in the latter half of the nineteenth century, as a result of three forces or incentives: a growing reaction against the traditional *Bhavai*; the rise of the modern stage; and the study of Sanskrit and English drama *Bhavai* was the indigenous folk-play which had catered for the unsophisticated masses for more than four centuries. A fusion of poetry, story and drama in literary form, it afforded, in performance, ample scope for dance, music and histrionic ability

The rise of the Gujarati stage was contemporaneous with that of the Marathi stage and the construction of theatres in Bombay after the model of the theatre of the West. The enterprising Parsis were the pioneers Acquaintance with the Sanskrit and the English (specially Shakespearean) drama which was a result of the University education provided two different dramatic types as models. There was a good amount of dramatic activity both on the stage and in literature in the last four decades of the nineteenth century. The stage, with its mythological, historical and social plays gained immense popularity, but the contribution to literature was very little The plays of Ranchhodbhai who is called 'the father of Gujarati drama' have now only a historical importance. *Veermati* and *Bhat-nu Bhopalun* of Navalram and *Pratap Natak* of Ganpatram are tolerably good. *Kanta*, by Manilal Dwivedi, shaped after the Sanskrit drama, is the only play of the period that possesses sufficient literary merit.

Drama of literary quality has developed only in the twentieth century, in trying circumstances. The professional stage, complacent with the popularity of its productions, had turned away from plays with literary merit. It created a class of professional playwrights called *Kavis*, leaving the literary drama to grow by itself outside the theatre. No wonder that in these circumstances the writers looked to classical Sanskrit plays and Western drama for inspiration and emulation. *Raino Parvat* (1914) by Ramanbhai Nilkanth, a Gujarati classic, is a happy combination of the technique and the spirit of the Sanskrit and the Shakespearean drama. Sanskrit drama has even now not completely ceased to exercise an influence on Gujarati drama, as *Sharvilak*, a recently published five-act play by Rasiklal Parikh, bears out.

The literary drama has been considerably influenced by the western models It was Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and Goethe's *Faust* that Nanalal Kavi followed in his 'lyrical plays.' His *Indukumar* (1909), *Jaya-Jayant* (1914) and a dozen other plays, form a class by themselves. Loose in texture, employing quasi-poetical prose in dialogues, discussing lofty sentiments and ideas, and interspersed with admirable songs, they are the outcome of the exuberance of the romantic in Nanalal. Obviously these plays were not meant for the stage. The two historical plays of 'Kant', a compeer of Nanalal, shows how he could adapt his literary genius to the stage

The 'twenties showed some smart play-writing. B. K. Thakore's *Ugati Juvani*, a bold but unsuccessful attempt at working out a stageable realistic social play, was a pointer. The Western prose drama of the last quarter of the nineteenth century was fast being emulated. Pranjivan Pathak introduced Ibsen to Gujarat. He and Batubhai Umarwadia tried to follow Ibsen. They also attempted to write one-act plays. While they tried to infuse some intellectual content into the Gujarati drama, Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi and Chandravadan Mehta endowed it with stageability. Both of them took to drama in the 'twenties and were

more active in the 'thirties and after Chandravadan Mehta is 'at it' even today Munshi has to his credit some delightful social farces and serious mythological plays. In his serious plays he has tried to recapture the spirit of the Vedic age and of the Aryan exploits Chandravadan has attempted all types of drama · farces, melodrama, radio-plays, etc Gifted with histrionic talent and a stage-sense, he has been a pioneer of the amateur stage in Gujarat. The professional stage with its sub-plots full of irrelevant 'comics' (as they were called) and songs which had neither music nor poetry, soon created an aversion to it among the élite. It was the price it had to pay for its refusal to grow and move with the changing times and tastes. This resulted in the humble beginning of the amateur stage in the 'twenties, which became more active in the 'thirites and after. It was the amateur stage which by performing the plays of Munshi and Chandravadan bridged the gulf between the stage and the literary drama

The professional stage received a great set-back with the advent of the 'talkies' and speedily began to dwindle after 1930 Since then, it has been a hard struggle for it to exist This, however, did not come in the way of the development of the drama as such The output of drama, in fact, increased considerably in the 'thirties *Agagadi*, a tragedy by Chandravadan Mehta, with a poor locomotive fireman as the hero and *Sapna Bhara* by Umashankar Joshi, a collection of admirable one-act plays, were the two outstanding works marked by realism. They use colloquialisms of the rural dialect, which brought Gujarati drama still nearer to life It was the natural outcome of the humanism and social awareness generated by the spiritual dynamism of Mahatma Gandhi. Krishnalal Shridharani made a promising debut with his *Vadlo*, *Mor-nan Indan* and *Padmini* wherein he tried to follow the footsteps of masters like Tagore, Ibsen and Maeterlinck. Besides, there were many young playwrights like Indulal Gandhi, Govindbhai Amin and Jayanti Dalal who contributed their mite The younger writers worked mostly on one-act plays.

In the last decade and a half, the atmosphere has been favourable for drama. The amateur stage which, till then, consisted of stray performances by students, now gathered more strength and became something like an active movement Amateur theatrical groups have come into existence in cities like Bombay, Ahmedabad, Baroda and Surat, and they have been trying commendably, with flickering enthusiasm and success, to fill up the void created by the decline and the disappearance of the professional stage This has created a natural demand for well-written stageable plays. Broadcasting has given good impetus to drama-writing and has brought in two new types—the radio play and what is called 'Sangeet-roopak' (the musicals). State patronage in the form of prizes awarded to the best playwright and the best performance of the year is yet another incentive. The films still hold the field; but the counter-attack from the stage has started. It is a challenge to the playwrights and producers.

Though the one-act play is more in vogue, full-length plays have not ceased to be written Lighter comedies like *Chhie Tej Thik* and *Vah Re Men Vah* by Munshi, *Panjarapol* by Chandravadan Mehta, *Mumbo Jumbo* by Yashodar Mehta, *Jamairaj* by Pannalal Patel and *Hun Ne Mari Vahu* by Chunnilal Madia have been popular Serious plays like *Alla Beli* by Gunvantrai Acharya, *Ranchhodlal* by Yashodhar Mehta, *Dhoomraser* by Dhansukhlal Mehta and Gulabdas Broker, *Hari Rath Chale* by the late Bachubhai Shukla, *Parki Jani* by Nandkumar Pathak, *Sumangala* and four others by Shivkumar Joshi, *Be Naree* (Two Women) and *Ghar-Lakhoti* by Bharati Sarabhai, *Shoonya-shesh* by Chunilal Madia and *Sharvilak* by Rasiklal Parikh have also held their own. The last four are a new achievement in Gujarati drama

In the one-act play the contribution of Umashankar Joshi, Jayanti Dalal, Durgesh Shukla, Chunilal Madia, Gulabdas Broker and Shivkumar Joshi is noteworthy. The output of this period shows a good variety of themes and technique, and a fair command of dialogue. The technique of the films

and the radio-play is also availed of by some writers. A number of radio-plays, song-plays and dance-plays, too, have been written to satisfy the demand of broadcasting and the new stage. The dialogue-poems in *Pracheena* by Umashankar Joshi bring out the potentialities of verse drama or poetic drama.

In this review I have not referred to to the translations and adaptations which have been published and also produced on the amateur stage in plenty. It is a fact that Gujarati drama, now a hundred years old, has not kept pace with other branches of creative literature, like the novel and the short story, which started their career later. Perhaps every other Indian literature has the same tale to tell.

Anantrai Raval

HINDI DRAMA

The growth of modern Hindi dramatic literature is closely linked with the development of modern Hindi language and literature Bhartendu Harishchandra was one of the founders of modern Hindi prose and his dramas along with his essays were an important medium of developing the written language. Being a good actor himself, he brought the stage in close contact with the people. He translated or adapted plays from Sanskrit, Bengali and English, and wrote original plays on social, political, mythological and historical themes. He introduced a copious amount of poetic stuff in them but he expressed himself best in his satirical and realistic comedies The last four decades of the nineteenth century in Hindi literature are noted for the writers' love of fun and humour, sharp political and social awareness and a raciness of style Bhartendu Harishchandra successfully opposed both the vulgarized stage-play of the Parsi theatre-companies and the imitation of English dramas. His plays show a fine blending of the folk-stage and elements from classical Sanskrit drama.

Almost all the disciples and contemporaries of Bhartendu wrote plays, one of the most brilliant among them being Radhacharan Goswami who wrote witty satires on priests and landowners.

In the age of Bhartendu, essay, poetry and drama were the three main forms of literature that were developed. With the dawn of the twentieth century, poetry and fiction occupied the attention of the writers more and more. Compared to the earlier period, there is a certain decline in dramatic literature. Madhava Shukla, however, kept the flag flying patiently and courageously. He founded the Hindi Natya Parishad at Calcutta which maintained and strengthened the bonds between the literary play and the stage. Like Bhartendu Harishchandra, Madhava Shukla was inspired by patriotic motives in his literary activity. He and his friends drew themes from the ancient epics and medieval history to inspire the people in their struggle for national independence The theme of young Abhimanyu's struggle from the *Mahabharata* and Rana Pratap's heroism from history were very popular with Hindi dramatists The poet Makhanlal Chaturvedi's play, *Krishnarjuna Yuddha*, is an important work in the same tradition with its theme from the *Mahabharata* The anti-imperialist struggle of the 'twenties was a great incentive to the growth of Hindi drama The arrogance of the petty officials of the bureaucracy was ridiculed, the hangers-on of the British were laughed to scorn. There was a spontaneous movement among amateurs in schools, colleges, and the middle classes in the towns with a very great variety in themes and quality of acting. One of the writers whose comedies were immensely popular on the stage was Badrinath Bhatt.

The two decades after the first World War saw the efflorescence of the romantic movement in Hindi called Chhayavad This influenced every form of literature including drama. One of the main figures in this movement was Jayashankar 'Prasad'. His intellectual outlook is interesting in connection with his dramatic works. He was opposed to those who considered the world to be unreal and the cause of human suffering. Life is meant for joy though

this joy has nothing to do with unrestrained hedonism. Like Kalidasa, he believed the material world to be the palpable image of Lord Shiva

This intellectual outlook is closely allied to his patriotism. The result is that he does not create a world of fantastic illusions in his dramas as many romantic poets have done here and abroad His great dramas, *Ajatashatru*, *Skandagupta*, *Chandragupta*, etc., take their themes from those periods of Indian history which were marked by political and social turmoil, civil strife and external aggression. Such conflicts had a topical significance. In *Skandagupta*, the poet Kalidasa as Matrigupta, challenges and fights the Huns who have attacked the country 'It is my duty to sacrifice my life for the defenceless,' he says and turning to the Hun soldiers, he draws his sword with these words, 'Cowards! How dare you oppress the women-folk?' The anti-imperialist sentiments of Prasad are finely blended with his anti-feudal humanism Along with writers like Premchand and 'Nirala', he fought for a just place for women in Indian society Women play an important part, both for good and evil, in his dramas It is a woman, Vijaya, who teaches even the great Kalidasa his duty in a time of crisis 'This is not the time for astonishment or sorrow Poet Laureate! Enough of erotic sentimentalism, fanciful music and the endless songs of love! For once, sing the song of awakening so that the people, convinced of their mortality, may rise for the service of immortal Bharata!'

Beautiful songs and lyrics are strewn all over in Prasad's dramas Besides, his prose has a rich poetic quality about it His dramas stand midway between the romantic poetic drama and the realistic problem play He is a master of characterization and dramatic conflict, it is not because of these that his dramas lack stage-worthiness His poetic imagery, philosophical thought and Sanskritized diction have prevented his plays from being popular on the stage. Nevertheless, more than once, his plays have been staged successfully The content of his dramas is not opposed to but closely allied to the realism of Premchand. Prasad's

novel, *Titli*, published a few years before *Godan*, is an important landmark in Hindi realistic fiction of the 'thirties. Had Prasad's life not been cut short prematurely, it is likely that as in fiction, he would have enriched dramatic literature with a new realism.

Jayashankar 'Prasad' exercised a deep influence on many succeeding dramatists. He cast his spell even on those who had begun by counterposing a new realism to his romanticism. Most of them, however, lack his sense of dramatic conflict and understanding of Indian history. The main trend in Hindi drama after Prasad has been that of realism. Udaya Shankar Bhatta, Hari Krishna 'Premi', Govind Vallabha Pant, etc, have written on mythological, historical and social themes with often a fine poetic quality about their work Lakshmi Narayan Mishra made a commendable attempt at creating the problem play in Hindi with emphasis on the situation of woman in our semi-feudal society. Upendranath 'Ashk' has shown a remarkable sense of craftsmanship and with his fluent dialogues has written plays on social themes that have been successful on the stage. This is also largely true of Ram Kumar Verma who handles historical themes cleverly Literary Hindi and Urdu usually keep away from the spoken idiom of the common people. Linguistic purism does not help the dramatist This is one of the reasons why Seth Govind Das, in spite of his voluminous work, has not won the success that otherwise might have been his owing to the popular nature of his themes

There are few writers in Hindi who are exclusively dramatists. Poets and novelists have often tried the dramatic genre as a sort of side-business Premchand wrote a few plays which lack the intensity of conflict found in his novels and short stories. While some of his novels have been adapted for the stage successfully, his plays have not aroused the interest of the stage-artist. Vrindabanlal Verma is one of the greatest novelists after Premchand and has written a good number of plays with greater success than his predecessor. Jagdishchandra Mathur, Vishnu Prabhakar, Vimla Luthra and others have written some very

successful dramas, specially one-act plays, with a rare combination of literary merit and a sense of stage-craft. On the whole, the modern Hindi playwright is deeply conscious of the fact that the play is meant primarily for the stage The Prithvi Theatre of Prithviraj Kapoor is an important venture and might well contribute to the development of a national stage for Hindi dramas.

So far, plays have been staged mostly by amateurs. The IPTA is no exception to this. This has one advantage The realistic trend has been strengthened, though, fortunately, the intellectual debate is absent from the Hindi counterpart of the English problem-play Along with Ibsen and Shaw, Gorky and Chekhov are other formative influences There is also the living folk-tradition of ballets, tableaus, *nautankis*, *Ramlila*, etc. This too has influenced some of our writers Satirical plays full of fun and laughter are very much in demand Important social functions of students, workers and peasants are considered incomplete without a play There are uninhibited experiments going on from poetic drama to farce Dance and song, the old concomitants of the play since the days of Bharata's *Natya Sastra*, are still very much there If we cannot boast of a national stage, we have nevertheless a popular dramatic movement

The disadvantage is revealed in the unequal quality of acting as well as of plays This is largely owing to the colonial legacy of an economically backward people The cinema and the radio are also keen competitors and some of the talented actors of the Hindi stage have been forced to seek their means of livelihood in the filmworld It is not possible for a dramatist or an actor to live on the income from the theatre This is the greatest obstacle in the path of the full flowering of our dramatic literature. This can be overcome, at least partly, with State-help The three other and main requisites for the development of drama are already there talented dramatists, enthusiastic actors—men and women both—and an interested audience. We may therefore look to the future with hope and confidence

Rambilas Sharma

KANNADA DRAMA

Contemporary Kannada drama may be studied in four periods: The period of mythological plays and translations—1880 to 1920; the period of revolt—1915 to 1930; the period of New drama—1925 to 1945; and the period of reconsolidation since Independence.

At the turn of the century, one could pause and look back with satisfaction at the impressive career of the Kannada stage during the preceding fifty years. It looked established. It could boast of a prolific dramatic literature of original and translated plays; it had a number of itinerant troupes. *Mitravinda Govinda* of Narasingarya, the first available Kannada play, dated 1680, was revived The Yakshagana Group of Kirki, which visited Sangli in 1842, had initiated the commercial stage in Maharashtra; Turamuri Seshagirirao had rendered *Sakuntala* into Kannada in 1869; and Kannada *Javadis* had contributed in moulding the music of the Marathi stage D Krishnamacharlu, the first playwright of the Telugu stage, was so impressed with the performances of the visiting troupes from Mysore and Dharwar that he wrote his first play *Swapna Aniruddha* in Kannada. His friends, he says, were of the firm opinion that Kannada was *the* language for writing drama. Later in the nineteenth century, the Kannada stage in North Karnataka, faced by the challenge of the Marathi theatre, consolidated itself under the guidance of Sakkari Balacharya (Santakavi) He was indeed the 'Karnataka-nataka Prathamaguru' He wrote more than fifteen full-length plays and trained his troupe, the Kritapurastha Natakamandali of Gadag. Royal patronage had helped to stabilise the Mysore stage By 1885, the professional stage became a reality, and the scholars got busy translating plays from Sanskrit, Marathi and English dramatic literatures to meet the new demands

The period from 1880 to the end of the second decade of the present century was one of original mythological plays and

translation of classical plays from other languages. Under the patronage of Chamaraja Wodeyar, scholars like Karibasappa Sastri, Ayya Sastri, D. N Mulabagal and Gururayacharya brought out translations of almost every known Sanskrit play, of Bhasa, Sudraka, Kalidasa, Visakhadatta, Bhavabhuti, Bhattanarayana and Kshemeswara Karibasappa Sastri, the most celebrated of them, was hailed as the 'Abhinava Kalidasa' because of his rendering of *Sakuntala* into Kannada

The North Karnataka stage, however, drew plays from the Marathi dramatic literature Gururao K. Mamadapur, Mudavidu Krishna Rao, Wamanrao Master and Garud Sadasivarao rendered major Marathi plays into Kannada Most of the well-known Telugu plays also, particularly of Veereshalingam Pantulu, were translated by Nanjanagudu Srikanthasastri A large number of plays in English, mostly of Shakespeare, were rendered into Kannada by a host of literary men led by Gundo Krishna Churamuri and Kerur Vasudevacharya in North Karnataka and C Subba Rao, A Anand Rao and M L Srikantha Gowda in Mysore In later years, a few Bengali plays, like *Tapobala* of G C. Ghosh, *Krishnakumari* of Michael Madhusudan Dutt, *Shajahan* of D L Roy, were also translated into Kannada by C K Venkataramiah, M N Kamat and B Puttuswamiah

To say that early dramatic literature in Kannada came from other languages is not to undervalue the original contributions of Santakavi, Srinivasa Kavi (Venkannacharya Agalagatti), Veerappa Sastri, Rajakavi Srinivasa Iyengar and others By 1921, Bellave Narahari Sastri had, in the words of E P Rice, become 'one of the most prolific dramatic authors' Narayana Rao Huilgol and Garud had written even social plays for the stage and Kandgal Hanumantarao joined them later The early plays dealt with different themes mostly drawn from ancient romantic lore, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata*.

Later, beginning with the third decade of the present century, lives of saint-poets like Tukaram, Kabir and Sarana

Basava (by Garud), Hemaraddi Mallamma (by Bellave) and Akka Mahadevi (by B. Puttuswamiah) came to be depicted on the stage. In the new atmosphere of resurgent nationalism came the plays dealing with the lives of our heroes and heroines like Ecchama Nayaka, Tipu Sultan, Nargund Babasahib and Kittur Chennamma. Occasionally, even a social play like *Sikshana Sambhrama* or *Samsara Nauka* crept in. But the stage looked too much overloaded with gods and goddesses, demons and witches The language of the plays was heavy, literary and artificial The presentation was crude with excessive settings and gaudy costumes Pantomime was substituted for acting. Stage-music ran riot except when handled by a genius like Varadachar. The shows were far too lengthy and slow-moving for they had to span the period from dusk to dawn

This caused a natural reaction among the newly educated intelligentsia who demanded the intellecutal play and a rational presentation. There was a move to uproot the existing order of the commercial stage and to put something better in its place Iconoclastic playwrights like Kailasam in Mysore, Sriranga in North Karnataka and Karanth in South Kanara ushered in the period of revolt in the 'twenties.

A new literary order with its new drama emerged. Tastes had changed and the amateur stage was there to express it. This inevitably had its effect on the professional He made hurried compromises by changing his themes and manner of presentation. The Halageri Company had already switched over to the social play Garud's plays like *Paschattapa* and *Satya Sankalpa*, though historical in setting, were social in spirit and implication The celebrated Mohammad Peer held the stage with Simha's social play, *Samsar Nauka*. Later, K. Hirannayya triumphed with his great satires like *Devadasi* and *Makmal Topi* Even the Gubbi Company, which had found its greatest glory in mythological themes, took to staging social plays like *Nishamahime*, *Sahukara* and *Kalachakra*

The amateur stage continued to gain strength. Its aim was now to see that theatre did not remain a mere entertainer. Its role was to teach as well and to combat social diseases like blind faith, illiteracy, casteism, unequal marriage, the dowry-system, drunkenness and the like.

The new drama developed in different channels. The blank-verse play gradually came into its own. The legendary play, verse-play, the musical, phantasy and the opera followed. Later, the discussion play, the impromptu-play and the radio play came in to the field Though mythological and historical themes were touched now and then, this period marked the supremacy of social themes which started with Narayanarao Huilgol in North Karnataka and Kailasam in Mysore Kailasam, Sriranga and Karanth, the leading trio of the revolt, wrote fearlessly and ceaselessly for three decades using sharp weapons of irony and satire Karanth remained a great experimenter in themes and theatre-modes Kailasam and Sriranga touched a variety of themes, mostly dealing with middle-class life—ripping open the social organism, laying bare pretention and hypocricy A N Krishna Rao brought in his scalpel too A touch of high individual brilliance was given by D R Bendre with his biting satire in plays like *Uddhara* and *Sayo Ata* V. K. Gokak gave a glimpse of his pointed humour in his *Vimarsaka Vaidya*, but turned to more purposeful ideological plays like *Jananayaka* and *Yugantara* Senior writers like R S Mugali, Krishna Kumar Kallur, L J Bendre and N K Kulkarni added a good deal of variety to the social drama of North Karnataka The Kailasam tradition was brilliantly continued by G P Rajaratnam and kept up by Parvatavani Ksheerasagara and Kaiwara Raja Rao gave interesting domestic pictures. One-act plays came into their own A host of writers—old and young—including K T Puranik, M N. Babu, Kumara Venkanna, K Gundanna and Dasarathi Dixit contributed to the bulk of the new dramatic literature

Thus Kannada dramatic literature came to be substantial in volume because of its social drama, but, surely, it would have

suffered in substance and variety but for the blank-verse drama built to such a grand eminence by K. V. Puttappa and his senior contemporaries like B. M. Srikantiah, Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, D. V. Gundappa and M R Srinivasa Murthy. The historical plays of Samsa, that strange genius 'who possessed a Shakespearean apprehension of character, plot and atmosphere'; the grand operas of P T. Narasimhachar and also of Keertinath Kurtkoti; the striking folk plays of Ajjampur; the adaptations of Mathew Arnold, Molière, Ibsen and Shakespeare by V. Sitaramiah, A. N. Murthy Rao, S. G Sastri and Parvatavani; the impromptu-plays given by N Kasturi, the comic opera, shadow-plays and mimes fashioned by Karanth; the dramatic monologues of Kaujalagi Hanumanta Rao, Ksheerasagara and Krishna Kumar, the radio plays of Sivaswamy, Chaduranga, Beechi, Betageri and Ramachandra Sarma and the children's plays by Puttappa, Hoysala and others have all helped to make the contemporary drama what it is L J Bendre, V. M. Inamdar, G. G. Hegde and Parvatavani hold out promise of becoming Kannada's major playwrights

After the first flush of excitement, however, one began to realise that the weakness of the amateur stage lay in its very strength—the experimenting playwright often stood on uncertain ground, the actor from the University was a dilettante, the play of ideas sacrificed the emotional appeal, and the colloquial still waited to be forged into a weapon of power It certainly looked as though the Kannada stage, in spite of its heavy bulk of social drama, had lost its moorings because of its emphasis on catering to the classes It seemed cut off from the main stream of life, and the irony of it was that, after two decades, even the educated seemed weary of the new drama, which in any case had been left severely alone by the common man.

The partition and national independence brought in a rich variety of themes in our drama. The unification of the Kannada-speaking areas brought an awareness of ourselves and a sense of

self-evaluation. Now, with the encouragement given to the stage and the playwright, the Kannada theatre seems to be finding its feet again. Yakshagana is coming into its own. The professional stage is consolidating itself as seen by the recent long runs of Gubbi's *Kurukshetra*, Yenigi Balappa's *Basaveswara* and Chittarigi Company's *Jeevanayatre*. The amateur stage seems to be at work again with a greater determination, as evidenced by the activities of several talented troupes. Drama Conferences and Festivals are proving beneficial to the resurrection of the stage The audience is becoming increasingly thoughtful and critical Here lies the real hope for the Kannada stage. In rebuilding it, its writer has to remember the lessons of the past. The new drama should not cut itself adrift from the main stream of life It should not concentrate too much, as Moorthy Rao puts it, 'on passing problems of day to day life, but touch the basic, primeval, fundamental things,' which the great dramatist in any country has always done It is in such a playwright that the strength and stability of the future Kannada drama lies

H K Ranganath

KASHMIRI DRAMA

By an optimistic study of the usually reticent sources of history in Kashmir one does find reasons to believe that dance and drama were not unknown in ancient times There are obvious references to actors in the historical accounts that have come down to us, the most obvious of them being in the most known record, the *Rajatarangini* But there is no record of these arts in the later centuries

Some of the more enthusiastic surveyors would have us believe that a somewhat grotesque folk pattern of entertainment called the 'Banda Pathar' was a form of drama which persisted through-

out these centuries. No doubt the 'band' groups have been moving from village to village giving performances in open air, playing *dhol*, *tasha* and *surnai*, a local copy of the *shahnai*, presenting a long-haired boy as a dancer whose only virtue was that he could shiver and wriggle, and a person who stood up in the midst of the audience as a king and another person who acted his attendant. The rural audiences laughed heartily at their jokes and one would, without hesitation, accept the 'Band Pathar' as a genuine folk form of drama and dance if these performances exhibited any variety, or had any semblance of originality in them. It appears that the 'bands' have been repeating jokes and dances (just one pattern of bodily movement) for all the 'dark centuries' during which we fail to trace any links with the glorious past of the Kashmiri dance, music or drama.

The 'dark centuries' persisted even upto 1947. The invasion of Kashmir by tribal raiders in that year was a calamity which shook the people out of their centuries-old torpor. Out of a mild and timid people were moulded not only fighters on the battle-field but also poets and playwrights to inspire the people.

During those turbulent days the tempo of achievement was unparalleled. In one bound poets like Nadim and an effective group of playwrights in the Kashmiri language appeared on the scene. These plays were staged not only in the capital of the State but in all other towns as well Among the writers were Prem Nath Pardesi, Akhtar Mohiuddin, Amin Kamil, Ali Muhammed Lone, Noor Muhammad Roshan, Som Nath Zutshi and Umesh Kaul. They wrote for the Cultural Front and enthused the defenders of Kashmir in their fight against evil, the two-nation theory and religious fanaticism. They waxed eloquent over the prospects of a new life in a glorious link with the rest of the country. Prominent contributions in this respect were skits like *Zamin Sanz* (Who Owns the Land?), *Wiz Chhe Sone* (The Time is Ours) and *Jangbaaz* (The War-monger). It was, however, obvious that they wrote for an emergency which naturally limited

the scope of their talent. Glowing in form and forceful in purpose, none of these plays, however, had in them other essentials of lasting literature But they gave a fillip, set up a stage and established a tradition Talent had been stirred and even when the demands of an emergency were no longer there, other demands goaded these writers to new forms and new techniques. One of them was the form and technique of radio drama. Scores of radio plays have since been written by Pushkar Bhan, Noor Muhammad Roshan, Ali Mohammad Lone, Amin Kamil and others. Some radio farces in the 'Machama' series by Pushkar Bhan live in the memories of the listeners, and Amin Kamil's stage play about the New Kashmir was quite successful.

But it was left again to the master poet Nadim to write the first two operas in Kashmiri and make them memorable These are the *Bambur-Yambarzal* (The Bumble-bee) and the *Narcissus and Heemal Nagraj*, which is based on a very fascinating and old folk-tale of love episodes between a human beauty and a snake-prince Although neither of these was successfully staged, both of these operas are efforts at lasting literature. They abound in beautiful flashes of high-class poetry and will be read and enjoyed for a long time

Prem Nath Dar

MALAYALAM DRAMA

Malayalam drama has a history of barely seventy-five years. In fact the major portion of the output has been published only in the last twenty-five years The publication of the Malayalam rendering of Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Sakuntalam* by Kerala Varma in 1882 is a landmark in the history of Malayalam literature. Though the translation was in a highly sanskritised *Manipravala* style, the classic in the new garb made a tremendous appeal, both on and off the stage Attracted by the unprecedented success

of this new experiment, translations of other Sanskrit plays, good and indifferent, began to appear in quick succession and slowly drama as a recognised literary form found its way in the language.

But in a land which produced the world-renowned Kathakali, was there no dramatic literature before 1882 ? The answer is a plain No, in the sense in which the term 'drama' is now understood. There is always a tendency to discover something, however indirectly related, in the hoary past so that the history of anything can be made to appear long and impressive. Like many other regions of India, Kerala also had its own temple-arts and folk-arts of old. Among the temple-arts, *Koothu*, *Padhakam* and *Kootiyattam* and among the folk-arts *Tiyattu*, *Mudiyettu* and *Olappavakkoothu* are more important. Any type of visual art in Kerala, including Kathakali, has drawn considerably from these. Kathakali is performed on the stage and its literature reads like poetic dialogue, nevertheless, as an art form it is different in concept from the drama proper The actors are dumb and speak with their eyes and gestures, while the dialogue is recited or sung by one or two people who stand behind them. Its literature resembles in some ways the Greek tragedies The existence of Kathakali and its literature, which has a history of 300 years, is perhaps responsible for the late flowering of dramatic literature proper in Kerala.

Drama, as we now understand and use the term, is, by and large, a borrowed form of art in Kerala. I have already indicated the influence of Sanskrit in the early stage of the evolution of the dramatic literature in Malayalam. Even before this, drama had in a way found its way into Kerala The Portuguese who came to Kerala as early as the sixteenth century were responsible for introducing *Chavittunatakam* which is a type of play similar to the Miracle plays of the West. *Genoa*, *Caralman* and *Napoleon* are some of the better known plays of this type. The use of costumes and masks as well as curtains for the stage which they introduced was a novelty in Kerala. However, the literary

quality of the songs and dialogues in *Chavittunatakam* was rather low. The movement of the actors on the stage arrests our attention as acrobatics, being more vigorous than graceful, more martial than artistic. Those who did not possess enough technical knowledge to appreciate Kathakali, supported and encouraged this early attempt of dramatic portrayal in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Adverting again to the Sanskrit tradition, it may be said that translations of classics like *Janaki Parinayam* (1889), *Malavikagnimitram* (1890), *Uttararama Charitam* (1892) and *Ascharya Choodamani* (1893) found their way into Malayalam late in the nineteenth century. *Sakuntalam* for example has been translated by more than a dozen scholars and still the attempts have not ceased

In addition to Kerala Varma Thampuran, the more important names are A R Raja Raja Varma, Attoor Krishna Pisharodi and Vallathol Narayana Menon Some writers considered it worthwhile to cast mythological stories in the mould of the Sanskrit drama, the notable examples are *Kalyani Natakam* (1889) by Kochunni Thampuran, *Bhagavaddoothu* by Naduvathu Namboodiri and *Chandrika* (1892) by Kunhikuttan Thampuran *Ebrayakutty* (1893) by Kandathil Varghese Mapillai is a similar drama based on the life of Joseph of the Old Testament A few of these were performed on the stage also; but they were not popular.

When the interest in Sanskrit type of drama dwindled the musical drama of the Tamil Nad made its way into Kerala Replete with songs of the Karnatak type, even those who did not follow the Tamil language found something enjoyable in it The hero and heroine were always first-rate musicians so that few bothered about their acting talent or the quality of dialogue With scenic arrangements, colourful costumes and elaborate songs, the professionals from the Tamil Nad captured the imagination of the rank and file. The technique was then adapted

into Malayalam which resulted in a good number of musical dramas. Among them, *Sadarama* by K. C. Kesava Pillai, *Sangeeta Naishadham* by T. C. Achutha Menon and *Balagopalan* by Kuttamath are more popular. The people in course of time had a surfeit of the long drawn-out songs which were sung in season and out of season. The burden of this artificiality could not be sustained for long and the educated people were out to welcome something more realistic.

Thus comes the next and most important phase in the evolution of the Malayalam drama, namely the influence of the English plays. Though *Chavittunatakam* of the seventeenth century is also the result of western influence, its legitimate place is only the archives. The real impact of western plays is seen only towards the turn of the century. Firstly we find some English dramas translated into Malayalam and then similar classics from French, German and Russian. Shakespeare's *King Lear* by Judge Govinda Pillai and *The Taming of the Shrew* by Varghese Mappilai were published towards the end of the nineteenth century Later, *Othello, The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night* were also published *Ghosts, Rosmersholm, The Proposal, The Power of Darkness, The Rivals, Oedipus* and many others have come into Malayalam during this century. There have been a few original plays also written in the last quarter of the nineteenth century adapting the technique of the western playwrights But it is C. V. Raman Pillai who converted the trickle of the modern drama into a steady flow. Though his major works are historical novels, his diversion into the field of drama has resulted in eight stage-worthy humorous plays. The modern period thus starts with C.V

There has been a considerable output of plays in the last 35 years. It is difficult to review even the most outstanding among them in a chronological manner. I shall therefore divide them into a few categories and touch upon the main trends.

HISTORICAL PLAYS

It may appear strange that C V. Raman Pillai who has not written any historical drama is considered as the father of historical drama in Malayalam The fact is that his famous historical novels *Marthanda Varma, Dharmaraja* and *Ramarajabahadur* were dramatised by others incorporating in a large measure the brilliant dialogues in the novels. The success of these plays on the stage inspired younger writers to try their hand at similar themes. One of the most outstanding among them is E.V. Krishna Pillai who wrote *Sitalakshmi, Raja Kesavadas* and *Iravikuttippillai* Kappana Krishna Menon has written a long play based on the life of Kerala Varma Pazassi Raja who so bravely fought the British Perhaps the most notable contribution in the field of historical drama in Malayalam is *Velu Thampy Dalava* written by Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai Velu Thampy is the first revolutionary of India who continuously opposed the British rulers and finally sacrificed his life for the cause The drama depicts his heroic life in a forceful way Padmanabha Pillai has also written a drama on the life and passion of Jesus Christ, *Kalvariyile Kalpa Padapam*, which is noted for its vitality and emotional appeal

HUMOROUS PLAYS

The most notable humorist of the century is E V. Krishna Pillai After trying his hand at a few historical plays, he switched over to writing humorous plays and farces. *B A. Mayavi, Pranayakkamishan, Mayamanushan* and *Pennarasunad* are interesting comedies The author has no other intention except to make the audience laugh and at that he is immensely successful. These plays were staged in and outside Kerala for several years. There was a good team of actors in Trivandrum who were responsible for popularising these plays Among them special mention must be made of C. I Parameswaran Pillai, N. P Chellappan Nair and M G Kesava Pillai

Chellappan Nair followed in the footsteps of E V. and produced a number of plays depicting social evils in a humorous vein.

Another person who has written quite a number of humorous plays which are widely popular on the stage is T. N. Gopinathan Nair. The more important among his plays are *Nilavum Nizhalum* (Moonlight and Shade), *Parivartanam* (Change) and *Akavum Puravum* (Inside and Outside). His dialogue is simple and lively; but he does not give proper attention to the development of characters Thikkodiyan and Sivadasa Menon have also written hilarious comedies The influence of Molière was in no small measure responsible for this rich harvest of comedy and farce But during the war years, particularly after 1942, there was a change in the outlook of playwrights They wanted to make people think rather than laugh which brought the social and political problems into the focus

SOCIAL PLAYS

Mariamma by Kocheeppan Mappillai is one of the earliest attempts at social drama in Malayalam The conflict between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in the Christian community is the theme of this drama The realistic situations and the natural colloquial dialogue made the drama very successful on the stage. The suppressed condition of women in the Namboodiri Brahmin community was the subject of two interesting plays *Adukkalayil Ninnum Arangathekku* (From the Kitchen to the Drawing Room) by V. T Bhattatiripad and *Ritumati* (The Pubescent) by M. P Bhattatiripad have considerably helped in revolutionising the place of women in the community.

Thus we come to the contemporary scene, *i e*, the period after 1942 where Ibsenism has made a deep impression Several of Ibsen's plays have been translated into Malayalam by A Balakrishna Pillai, C Narayana Pillai, E. M Kovoor and others. But it is N Krishna Pillai who successfully copied the technique of Ibsen in his *Bhagnabhavanam*, *Kanyaka* and *Balabalam* and set in motion a wave of vitality and freshness. In his *Bhagnabhavanam* he tears to pieces the conventions of marriage and in his *Balabalam* the problem presented in *Mariamma* is treated in the Ibsenian technique. *Kanyaka* is a moving play which shows

that even if a woman is gainfully employed, the prospect of marriage would still lure her heart. In this play the Kanyaka or virgin, an officer on the wrong side of thirty, after a long mental struggle decides to resign her job and run away with her peon with the object of making him her husband

Other plays by Krishna Pillai are *Anuranjanam* and *Azhimukhathekku* (Towards the Rivermouth) The latter has recently received the prize for the best dramatic work from Kerala Sahitya Akademi It is the story of a revolution in the domestic life of a family which, though reduced to poverty, still clings to the old pomp They finally realise that there is nothing more honourable than hard work The ideal that Krishna Pillai has set before him is this: 'The ideal play is one in which some serious and fundamental human problem is realistically analysed and handled with the utmost concentration, avoiding wastage in words, dialogues, situations and characters' It may be true that there is little wastage in *Azhimukhattekku*, but some portions are neither convincing nor realistic

Tharavaditham by Cherukad is a very impressive social drama depicting certain evils of the undivided family system of the Nayars in Malabar The management of the entire property devolves on the eldest member and other members are at his mercy The tottering citadel of this old set-up is shaken to the foundation by the younger generation in this drama Another play which has come into limelight recently is *Ithu Bhoomiyanu* by K T Muhammad, in which the life of the Muslim community in Malabar is effectively portrayed Here also a new generation with a new sense of values rises up and challenges many of the old customs and irrational beliefs. Kesav Dev, Ponkunnam Varkey and Idasseri Govindan Nair have also written plays exposing the weaknesses of the existing social order But their works are in the main more political than social in approach. There are several others who have added to the dramatic literature of Kerala but most of them, in point of technique, are mediocre copies of prevailing European style.

POLITICAL PLAYS

Kerala with its high percentage of literacy, extreme poverty and unemployment has been a veritable hunting ground for politicians of every description. Even the illiterate labourer is politically conscious, unlike his brethren in other parts of India, and that is in some measure due to the way in which the dramatic medium was exploited by political protagonists. Each major party has a set of literary associates They started about a quarter of a century ago preaching through drama and of late they have evolved a method of fighting with each other through this medium.

One of the earliest political plays in Malayalam entitled *Pattabakki* (Balance of Rent) was written about twenty-five years ago by K. Damodaran, a Communist leader. It is the story of a poor tenant in Malabar who is kicked out of the land which belonged to him, by an unkind landlord Forced by circumstances the tenant resorts to thieving whereupon he is caught and jailed When he comes out of the jail after a few years he finds his wife a prostitute. When the first wave of anger subsides, he realises the situation and goes forward with her for a life-long fight against the unjust social order The background of the drama is the class-struggle in Kerala which is the root of political struggle there. *Pattabakki* is a realistic and effective political drama

The fight for responsible government sponsored by the Travancore State Congress rose to its highest pitch during the last days of a very powerful Dewan *Pratima* (Statue), a drama by K. Ramakrishna Pillai, attained special distinction in those days when the Government proscribed it The drama portrays the machinations of a dictator who wants to make the world believe that he is popular among the people of his country He gets his statue made and instigates some persons to erect it in the name of the public and finally the whole plan ends in chaos. The statue is the symbol of the crumbling capitalism. Ramakrishna Pillai has written another political play, *Vellappokkam* (The Flood), which was also proscribed by the then Government of Travancore.

Even the titles of some of the political plays indicate the present trend. *Manthriyakkolle* (Do'nt Make Me a Minister), *Ningalenne Communistakki* (You Have Made Me a Communist) and *Jnanippo Communistavum* (I Will Become a Communist Now) are some examples. *Ningalenne Communistakki*, written by a young playwright, Thoppil Bhasi in 1952, has created a record on the stage in Kerala. The Kerala Peoples' Arts Club has staged it over six hundred times already We have here the story of an old man who abandons his orthodox views and accepts communism when he understands the attitude of the capitalist and the plight of the poor working class Here we get the communist point of view regarding the struggle of the working class. The congress point of view is expressed through another play, *Jnanippam Communistavum*, by Kesava Dev In this play the maid-servant of an independent candidate awaiting election results threatens that she will become a communist The rough-and-tumble of elections and the way in which political parties try to purchase independent M L A s is the subject of satire in the play *Koottu Krishi** (Collective Farming) by Idasseri Govindan Nair is another play with a socio-political background The struggle of the agriculturist in Kerala is portrayed very effectively in this play

There are many other political plays written recently in Malayalam by Keshav Dev, Ponkunnam Varkey, Erur Vasudev and others An interesting point to be mentioned is the re-introduction of songs in plays after an interval of fifteen years But they are songs with a difference They show the revival of the folk music of Kerala The sale of the booklet containing the songs of *Ningalenne Communistakki* has run into more than one hundred thousand O N V. Kurup, the writer of the songs, has a rare gift of portraying the rural atmosphere by his specialised diction

OTHER CATEGORIES

There are several plays which cannot be included in any of the

*Sahitya Akademi has taken up this play for translation into other major Indian languages

above categories. *Mohamum Muktiyum* (Illusion and Deliverance) by Kainikkara Kumara Pillai is a drama of epic grandeur. The triumph of virtue over evil is depicted with unusual force through the medium of a puranic story cast in a new mould. *Mandodari* by K.M. Panikkar is a drama in a classical style giving a new interpretation to the role of Mandodari and certain other characters in the *Ramayana*. His *Bhismar* is also an outstanding work. *Sandhya* (Evening) and *Irittinu Munpu* (Before Darkness) are two plays by G. Sankara Kurup written in the symbolic style. C J. Thomas has not only translated *Antigone*, but also written a few plays of which *Crime No 27 of 1123* is an interesting experiment in dramatic form. Mention may be made of two plays written to caricature and ridicule playwrights who were slaves of prevailing fashions *Chakkeechankaram* by Rama Kurup exposes the weaknesses of the writer who copied the Sanskrit tradition blindly. In *Natakakrit* by Kesava Dev, the plight of the playwright and actors in the hands of the unsympathetic producer is pungently portrayed.

One-act plays and radio plays are also fast becoming popular in Malayalam K. Ramakrishna Pillai is one of the pioneers of one-act plays in the language N N Pillai has also made a substantial contribution in this field. He has a flair for picking out the comic from the daily life and letting his imagination play colourfully on it. Radio plays in Malayalam have been written since 1940 only, and most writers of one-act plays write for the Radio also The more well-known among them are S. K Nair, Ananda Kuttan, P Bhaskaran, Vira Raghavan Nair, C N. Srikantan Nair, R S Kurup, N. K Achari and Idasseri Govindan Nair.

Despite this profusion of dramatic activity, there is no theatre proper in Kerala. The dramatic art has emerged from the temple portals but has not yet found a home of its own. Most of the plays are performed in school-halls and in improvised theatres. There are various dramatic associations and amateur troupes but not a

single professional theatre. The more important among them are the Nataka Parishath Trivandrum, Kerala People's Art Club, K.P.T.A. at Ernakulam, Brother's Music Club and Kendra Kala Samiti at Kozhikode.

K. M. George

MARATHI DRAMA

Drama in Marathi has had a living tradition of over a hundred years Any consideration of its present position, therefore, cannot be divested of its rich background. By the beginning of this century the Marathi drama had developed its art-form, half dramatic half musical, taking both mythological and social themes in its stride The two great pioneers, Annasaheb Kirloskar and Dewal, true to their native Marathi genius, set up for subsequent playwrights an eclectic tradition enriched by both Sanskrit and western influences

The first decade was mainly dominated by Khadilkar While he was perfectly at home with a musical play like *Manapman*, the historical or mythological play was his forte His play, *Kichakvadha*, was banned by the then government. His characters are conceived with imagination and his plots deftly constructed show a rare understanding of the stage It is difficult to think of the success of an actor like Balgandharva without his personality in the background If he lacked in humour he lent to the Marathi stage a certain classical grandeur and high seriousness seldom recaptured in later times

Humour re-entered the Marathi stage with Kolhatkar and, to a lesser degree, with N C Kelkar Kolhatkar, with a reformist zeal in the social field—unfortunately prone to a love of the artificial and the fantastic—not only fascinated the lay audiences but his plays captured the imagination of a real

dramatist like Warerkar or an inspired writer like Gadkari. The latter, a kind of literary phenomenon in himself, showed an intensity of feeling bordering sometimes on the morbid. His plays shook Maharashtra to tears and laughter. His diction, though superficially ornate, reflects the stirrings of a sensitive heart overflowing with an emotional idealism. Gadkari's *Ekach Pyala* is the first real tragedy in Marathi.

Mama Warerkar is the first major playwright in the field of social drama of the modern type. In spite of Dewal's *Sharada* and Gadkari's *Bhavbandhan*, he alone deserves to be called a pioneer in this line Though he too could not shake off the artifice of the Kolhatkar school and in his propagandist enthusiasm sometimes failed to avoid the trite, he has the gift of reacting in a lively and dramatic manner to all kinds of problems — social, political and economic His *Satteche Gulam* and *Hach Mulacha Baap* started the vogue for social dramas. *Jiwashiwachi Bhet* is one of his many model propaganda plays. To him goes the credit of collaborating with Bapu Pendharkar, the actor-producer, in introducing the modern technique of presentation. The diction became homely, familiar and effective; the soliloquies and asides gradually disappeared and the old cumbrous wings and curtains, baroque scenes, were replaced by the realistic 'flats' His rich and long service to the radio and stage in general and the Marathi stage in particular has been very rightly crowned with the Sangeet Natak Akadami Award for the year 1957-58.

S P. Joshi and Madhavarao Joshi expressed their social reactions in the form of burlesque comedies and satirical farces. The former inclined to the fanciful and grotesque, while the latter relied more on Rabelaisian humour S P Joshi's *Vichitra Leela* or *Khadashtak* and Madhavarao Joshi's *Vinod* or *Municipality* deserved their success. Of an entirely different genre are the plays of Veer Wamanrao Joshi and Sawarkar. They are sustained by their authors' powerful personalities and their concern with higher values. A couple of historical

plays by Aundhkar represent the best work in that line. The efforts of these celebrated writers and other competent ones like N. R. Bamangaonkar or the acting talent of Chintamanrao Kolhatkar or K. Date, however, could not save the stage from the bane of a plethora of songs and the overwrought superficiality of spectacle.

The Marathi stage produced in its hey-day a varied style in singing; this theatrical music is part of our cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the singing often became more important than the drama and the development of the drama proper suffered in consequence. The end of the first quarter of this century saw Marathi drama helplessly trying to hold its own against the impending danger of the films. Music certainly was no answer to the threat of this product of modern scientific technique.

In the 'thirties, some frantic efforts were made to 'save the stage.' Some of these even tried to incorporate a bit of the film into the body of the drama and served merely to underline the helplessness of the stage S V. Vartak of *Andhalyachi Shala* fame, with a band of educated enthusiasts like himself, set about the task of ushering in a 'revolution' on the stage. He did succeed in modernising the stage to an extent but he himself as a writer fell short of his noble ambition With Vartak came modern lighting and the box-set His introduction of actresses on the Marathi stage set a vogue for natural acting which was overdue After all we get a Balgandharva once in a century and even a 'gandharva' among mortals is withered by age and staled by custom Two other efforts, entirely of different types, Bedekar's mythological *Brahmakumari* and W W Bhole's *Sarladevi* of the Ibsenian school, deserve special mention For the rest it was a dark period of academic discussion about the rise and fall of the Marathi stage, and some stray pot-boiling efforts of the actors who had lost their moorings, or some amateurish second-rate plays, sometimes borrowed, mostly plagiarised. The theatre was being driven into a corner by the films; the best writing and acting talent was attracted by the celluloid

and there seemed little hope for the future of the Marathi stage.

P. K. Atre came on the scene against this dismal background, which explains the mixed nature of his writings. He knew full well the Ibsenian technique of retrospective narration, and with his fund of humour and his ability to jerk quite a few tears with equal ease, he produced his peculiar blend and succeeded in stemming the rot Apart from his delightful farces like *Sashtang Namaskar*, he has to his credit two serious, though somewhat sentimental, plays: *Udyacha Samsar* and *Gharabaher*. He too was lured by the film and wider activities, and the stage had to look up wistfully to M G Rangnekar. Rangnekar is a fine combination of playwright, producer and showman He toned down the excesses of Atre school and gave in its place the domestic comedy. His plays are noted for their neatness. Rangnekar opens his plays on a very tense and well-knit presentation of some middle-class problem and ends them on a happy, if somewhat forced, compromise. Such an approach was bound to click with the middle-class audience and his *Kulavadhu*, featuring Jyotsna Bhole, had a phenomenal run. He showed in his *Vahini* that he could rise above his limitations In any case his crisp dialogues and slick presentation have given a modern look to our stage He again was the first major playwright to present professionally a set of one-act plays—an attempt later popularised by P L Deshpande and Tendulkar. He exhausted the possibilities of the box-set and drawing-room comedy and prepared the minds of the audience for something more serious and experimental.

The present spurt in dramatic activity covers a wide range—from the naive historical plays of G K Bodas and 'social' plays of Ayare, Dudwadkar, Suryawanshi, Ashtikar and Bhosle to the extremely sophisticated plays of Tendulkar and Sarita Padki. A kind of little theatre and repertory movement is growing fast trying out plays basically different from the thin and light fare provided by Tahmankar and

Bokil. The maudlin plays of Nagesh Joshi, the pale ones by Phadke, the playlets by Maltibai Bedekar or, for that matter, a players' play like *Karayla Gelo Ek*, no doubt, have served to fill the gap. The more serious work, however, has come from Mama Warerkar, H. V. Desai, Vakil, Muktabai Dixit, Bhat and Deorukhkar. Equally important is the contribution of producers like Altekar, Chintamanrao Kolhatkar and K. Date. No wonder that in this period of experimentation the authors have turned their attention to the works of famous western dramatists In doing this they are only following the tradition set by Dewal with his inimitable *Samshaykallol.* Molière and Maeterlinck, Shakespeare and Pirandello—all have come very handy Some of these efforts open up interesting possibilities indeed

Anant Kanekar's *Phas*, revolving round only two characters, showed in its production by K Narayan Kale and Leela Chitnis the immense possibilities of orchestral music. P L. Deshpande's *Ammaldar* provided a riot of laughter while Vakil's *Sarech Sajjan* hinted at the possibilities of psychological acting Shirwadkar's adaptation of *Macbeth* (*Rajmukut*) had the distinction of being produced by the noted British producer Herbert Marshall and acted by such eminent stars as Durga Khote and Nanasaheb Phatak. It was a revelation in the use of the proscenium and the creative decor provided by the artist D G Godsay. Nana Jog's recent adaptation of *Hamlet* to a three-act play produced by Damu Kenkre has evoked strong and opposite reactions The Marathi audiences used to the full-fledged *Hamlet* produced against a bare background and immortalised by the acting genius of Ganpatrao Joshi and later by the spasmodic Phatak, have found this new experiment highly intriguing Baburao Pendharkar's production of *Othello* (*Zunzarrao*) is another notable effort in Shakespearean revival.

The important original plays of recent times include Warerkar's sensitive *Saraswat* and *Bhumikanya Seeta* produced by Altekar, Shirwadkar's sympathetic *Dusra Peshwa* produced by Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangha, Nana Jog's socio-political

satire, *Sonyache Dev*, ably acted by Sakharam Joshi, Marathe's musical biography *Honaji Bala*, Tendulkar's angular *Shreemant*, Kanetkar's psychological *Vedyache Ghar Unhat*, distinguished by the masterly performance of Lagu, Dandekar's *Shitoo* presented by Indian National Theatre and above all P. L. Deshpande's delightful *Tuze Ahe Tujpashi* giving all the scope to a player like Bhatwadekar. Two important and effective plays, Bhave's *Swamini* and Bal Kolhatkar's *Durıtanche Timir Jawo*, came from the professional troupe of Bhalchandra Pendharkar. The productions of Bhalba Kelkar, Vijaya Jaywant, Atmaram Bhende, Manohar Paranjpe, Darwhekar and Hemchandra Gupte show a new awareness of the values of production. The audience has once again come home. Literary organisations in Nagpur and Bombay are straining every nerve to provide drama with a 'home'—a well-equipped modern theatre The government is taking a new interest in drama. Marathi drama, thus, is on the point of bursting into a new blossom held back by the paucity of theatres and the heavy entertainment tax. It is difficult to think of drama merely as an entertainment. This rich form of cultural expression deserves a better deal.

'Shantaram'

ORIYA DRAMA

The entire history of Oriya literature does not record a single dramatic writing in the modern sense from its beginning till the last quarter of the nineteenth century, except that evidence of one drama captioned *Padmabati Haran* having been written and staged as early as 1834 is available.

Oriya dramas, originally consisting of songs and dances, intended for people of all walks, were acted outdoors and thus needed no scenery. Orissa being a nourishing land of arts and architecture, music had exercised an abiding influence on the

minds of the people. The conception of Nrutyasabha or Natamandir designed in the great temples of Orissa prove unmistakably that the arts of dance and drama were being cultivated in the remotest past under the patronage of local rulers like Kapilendra Dev and Prataprudra Dev. Naturally this early drama was closely connected with religion and worship of the gods.

Lila, Suanga and Yatra constitute the earlier types of popular dramatic compositions in Oriya. Lila is further divided into Rasalila and Ramalila, the true representatives of the earlier dramatic forms adopted by authors and greatly enjoyed by the rural communities Besides these, Gotipua, Kela-Keluni, Keut-Keutuni and Dhoba-Dhobani are other dramatic varieties in the sphere of old school of dramatics and reflect the social behaviour, customs and beliefs of the people Their performances are highly interesting, popular and musical. Rasalilas, Kali Dalan, Gotipua and Suangas of Baishnab Pani help us to form an idea of the origin and gradual growth of drama in Oriya From these typical compositions, a regular vernacular drama sprang up in the middle of the nineteenth century

The history of dramatic movement in Oriya has witnessed three specific phases· dramas of historical and mythological character written during 1880—1915, dramas with nationalistic and social background written during 1915—1940 and dramas of socio-political, romantic and realistic nature written in the post-Independence period, dominated by science and technology.

To begin with, Ramsankar Rai (1858—1931) employed this new literary medium and wrote about 14 dramas among which *Kanchi Kaveri* (1880) and *Yugadharma* (1902) are distinguished as historical and social pictures respectively He adopted blank verse and showed a natural preference for historical canvas and contemporary social life. Bhikaricharan Pattnaik's writings including *Katak Vijaya* (1906), *Sansarchitra* (1915), Kampal Misra's mythological venture, *Sita Vibah* (1899), Jagmohan Lala's *Satinatak*, Gopinath Nanda's *Sakuntala* considerably added to

the dramatic literature in Oriya at the early stage of its development. Most of these plays were staged and were widely appreciated.

Padmanav Narayan Deb of Paralakhimedi and Radhamohan Rajendra Deb of Chikiti did a most useful service to the cause of dramatic composition in Oriya as well as to the making of a stage proper. Padmanav Narayan Deb wrote many plays: his *Ban Darpa Dalan* and *Pranalad* were performed on the stage at Paralakhimedi in 1902. Radhamohan Rajendra Deb's dramas drew on Pauranic legends and proved successful on the stage.

The dramatists of this formative period were influenced in style, language, and dramatic technique by Sanskrit plays. The Nandi, the Nati, the Sutradhara were introduced in their plays. Each act begins and ends with a verse. There were two theatres Basanti and Usha during 1900—1918, while Balanga Theatre also lasted for some years. The popular Rasa Party of Govindchandra Surdeo, Kendrapara, Mohansundar Dev Goswami, Puri, and Suangas and musical compositions of Luxikant Mahapatra, Baishnab Pani and Krushna Prasad Basu helped the study and cultivation of dramatic literature in Oriya.

The second phase of dramatic development and stage-craft commences with Aswinikumar Ghose, a voluminous playwright. His Pauranic drama, *Bhisma*, written and staged in 1915 was followed by a series of dramatic compositions, distinguished among which are *Purusottam Dev* (1917) and *Mukunda Dev* by Pandit Godavarish Misra, *Gauda Bijeta* by Rama Ranjan Mohanty, *Chandragupta* (1926) by Balkrushna Kar, *Bilwamangal* and *Sudama* by Ramchandra Mohapatra. A sense of strong nationalism is reflected in the plays of Pandit Godavarish Misra.

Ghose, a powerful dramatist, has written about thirty dramas during the years 1915—1955 and has delineated some unforgettable characters in his plays, among which *Konark* (1927), *Kalapahar* (1936), *Hindu Ramani*, *Tajmahal* (1933), *Sreemandir*

(1940), *Chasajhia* (1946) and *Sakhigopal* (1955) have an irresistible charm of their own and are invariably played on stage, professional and amateur He occupies a unique and significant position in the growth of the modern drama.

Subsequently other inspired writers with changed outlook and ideas took to dramatic composition Kalindicharan Panigrahi's *Piyadarsi* (1933), Harish Chandra Badal's *Desar Dak* (1932), Baikunthnath Pattanaik's *Mukti Pathe* (1933) and Mayadhar Mansinha's *Nasta Nida* (1939) may be described as model plays gradually introducing the new trends and techniques in modern dramatic writings.

The significant phase in the evolution of Oriya drama from 1936 onwards is marked by an increase of theatre-mindedness among the people and the emergence of a group of dramatists, preoccupied with social and political problems Dramas written in post-independence period have been much influenced by western literary modes. Heralding, as it were, the advent of a new age, the Arnapurna Theatre was established in the year 1936.

Kalicharan Pattnayak, who had earlier formed a Rasa-party, had in the meantime distinguished himself both by writing plays and founding the Orissa Theatres (1940) which lasted till 1950. He staged his first social play, *Girl School*, in 1942 Since 1940 he has produced socio-political plays like *Bhata*, *Bekar*, *Raktamandar*, *Raktamati*, *Phata Bhuin*, *Ahuti*, *Chumban* and nationalistic plays with historical background, like *Abhijan*, *Jayadev*, *Atibadi Jagannath Das* and *Sarala Das* He presented most of these plays on his stage and gave a new turn to dramatic writing and stage-technique

With the increase, after 1947, in the number of theatres such as Rupasree, Janata and another branch of Arnapurna Theatre, many young writers have taken to drama. A wave of general awakening stirred the imagination of Oriya dramatists to the

grim reality of social and political maladjustments and sad contrasts of modern life. The modern playwrights depict men and women in conflict with destiny or the inexorable forces of the contemporary social system. Social plays like *Bhai Bhauja*, *Ghar Sansar*, *Sai Padisa* of Ramchandra Misra, *Feria*, *Varasa*, *Sankhasindur* and *Parakalam* of Gopal Chottaray, *Dharmapatni* and *Lal Chabuk* of Lakshmidhar Nayak, *Garib*, *Manik Jodi* and *Benami* of Bhanjakishore Pattnaik and *Jauban*, *Agami* and *Abarodha* of Manoranjan Das are all well written and have been successfully staged. They herald a glowing future of the Oriya drama and stage. *Sadhab Jhia* by Adwait Charan Mohanty may be mentioned as a play based upon a folk tale Besides, the works of Kali Prasan Kabi, Sarala Devi, Udayanath Misra, Annanda Sankar Das, Narasingh Mahapatra, Lala Nagendra Kr. Ray and many young writers have added to this branch of literature

Closely allied to the drama proper, we have a good many one-act plays whose origin can be traced back to *Abruti Darpan* by Kulamoni Das in 1930 and other similar works. H. K Mahtab, Kalindicharan Panigrahi, Pranabandhu Kar as well as many young playwrights have written a good number of one-act plays and radio plays Mahtab's one-act plays of ideas are very thought-provoking Pranabandhu Kar depicts social pictures in his one-act plays. A collection of one-act plays was published in the year 1954 by this writer. Most of the radio plays are concerned with contemporary events. Poetic dramas are also not wanting in modern Oriya literature.

The development of stage-craft, commercial or amateur, in Orissa is closely linked with the history of dramatic writing. Since commercial returns and actability are the main test, and literary quality a secondary consideration for stage-success, the modern dramatist tends to sacrifice the literary values for stage effectiveness and the temporary appreciation of the audience. Without stage-worthiness a play like *Purusottam Dev* or *Bhanja Kabi*, no matter how excellent in literary expression, is not likely

to be accepted by the producer or the owner of the stage who is more important than the playwright. In spite of this growing importance of the stage as such, it cannot be claimed that the stage in Orissa is highly developed. The revolving stages have not yet come into being.

Outstanding Oriya novels like *Chhaman Athaguntha*, *Mamu*, *Matir Manisa*, *Jhanja* and *Sasti* have been successfully dramatised, and many foreign dramas have been translated, as for example, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* which was translated into Oriya in 1934. Despite the growth in the quality and number of the dramas and the popularity of their performance, no permanent stage has yet been possible, not to speak of a separate Children's Theatre The local dailies, however, devote a week-end column to reviews of stage and screen

The foregoing account of Oriya drama cannot claim to be thorough, since it has necessarily to be sketchy The significant fact that emerges out of this cursory review is that the drama and stage in Orissa are well set in their development and can look forward to a proud future *

Gopal Chandra Misra

PUNJABI DRAMA

The Punjabi theatre was started forty-five years ago by Nora Richards, the wife of P. E. Richards of Dyal Singh College, Lahore. Nora saw English plays performed in the college dramatic clubs and was shocked to see Punjabi boys and girls dressed in tail-coats and crinoline skirts. She perceived the living spark of the Punjabi language in the gesticulating peasants

**Oriya Natya Kala* (1939) by Girijasankar Ray gives a critical study of some Oriya dramas.

full of zeal and verve and encouraged one of her pupils, Ishwar Chand Nanda, to write a play in Punjabi. She directed *The Bride* in 1913, the first Punjabi play.

Before Nanda some plays were written and have come down to us as part of our literary tradition. Plays like Kirpa Sagar's *Ranjit Singh*, Budh Singh's *Nar Naveli* and Bhai Veer Singh's *Raja Lakh Data* were seldom performed. They are long stories written in a dialogue form. Theatre presupposes stage. So we cannot really consider Punjabi theatre of any significance before Nanda.

Ishwar Chand Nanda, Professor, Government College, Lahore, wrote and produced plays and took his troupe of boys to distant villages to perform, himself playing the lead, either as a young widow or as the rich contractor. He wrote *Subhdara* in 1920, a play championing the cause of widow re-marriage and in 1930 *Lila da Vyah* in which he satirises the merchants and the dowry-seekers He brought the flame of the spoken language He can lift from life the dialogue of shrews, the petty garrulous women, the greedy money-lenders, the corrupt monks, the contractors and merchants and put them in the mouths of his characters with amazing realism His famous plays are: *Lila da Vyah*, *Shamu Shah* and *Social Circle*, all full-length plays; and *Jhalkarey* and *Lishkarey*, collections of one-acts.

Nanda's characters, though well-individualised, represent types. There is no complexity of emotions in them. The texture of his plots is often loose. Threads of events hang about untwined. Carried away by the fineness of his well-spun phrases, at times he lengthens out his dialogue and sacrifices dramatic restraint. But the glowing dialogue of his characters makes them vivid and well-formed. The Punjabi theatre did not have to travel the cycle of historical thrillers, mythological melodramas and loud passion plays packed with songs and dances to arrive finally at realistic prose plays. At its very inception it had a down-to-earth realism.

In the late 'thirties Punjabi theatre entered a new phase. From mere social reform, Punjabi drama slowly ventured to touch psychological themes. Sant Singh Sekhon has written a number of plays that dare big themes; unfortunately they are somewhat sketchy in form. The characters, not properly worked out in terms of dramatic conflict, do not have the heat of passion which their lines express. Sekhon takes up an idea, often involving an attitude of rebellion against accepted trends, and embroiders incidents on it. Often his dialogue is heavy, garbled with archaic expressions. Out of his many plays, *Bhavi* transcends the limitations of his style Set in medieval times it brings out the brutal conflict of a mother-daughter jealousy, interlaced with father-son hate. Characters rage and clash and emit sparks. The play is tense and has appeal at many levels.

Joshwa Fazal Din and Rafi Peer, now settled in Pakistan, made an important contribution to Punjabi drama in the early 'forties. Joshwa in *Pind de Vairy*, exposes the evils of debt, drink and usury He champions the cause of the down-trodden peasantry His language is robust like Nanda's and bubbles with broad peasant humour Rafi Peer, an actor-producer trained on the western stage, wrote long one-act plays out of which *Akhian* (Eyes) and *Vairy* (Enemy) are the better known He weaves a rich pattern of love and hate and uses pointed and apt dialogue. His plays have a ferocity and intensity absent in the works of his predecessors. It is a pity that during the last 15 years he has not given us more than five or six one-acts.

Harcharan Singh, the most prolific playwright, started with his college dramatic club and has carried on for the last fifteen years Not belonging to any permanent theatre group (even an amateur), Harcharan Singh had solely to depend on the ever-changing batch of students who perform under his direction He is good in sketches and cameos of rural Punjab but seems to lack the stamina for a genuine full-length play He has kept the flame of drama alive in college clubs where his dramas have often been staged.

Kartar Singh Duggal uses symbolism which is too obvious. The symbols stand naked and shiver. That insight into characterisation which we find in his short stories is absent in his plays. All his characters speak the same language in the same style. The creeking, harsh movement of his prose which lends a quality of its own to his fiction jars on the ear in his dramas. *Diva Bujh Giya* (The Lamp is Blown Out), a one-act play in verse written in 1950, stands out as his best work. It deals with the love and sacrifice of a Kashmere mother and her son. The characters easily lend themselves to Duggal's high-flown poetic prose and appear to be convincing.

After the partition most of the theatre enthusiasts shifted from Lahore to New Delhi Gurdial Singh Khosla, a senior official in Railways, founded the Punjabi theatre in 1950 and produced most of his own plays among which *Buhe Baithi Dhi* and *Jutian da Jorha* are the best known. He rendered Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalian* into Punjabi Not acquainted with different dialects and the rich Punjabi idiom, his translation lacked Shaw's spiky dialogue Shaw juggles with the speech of different characters. Khosla is lost in finding equivalent words and misses the humour and power of the play.

The Delhi Art Theatre which produces realistic plays and operas has brought folk melodies and rural speech with all its fire and colour on the stage. Among their best known productions is *Heer Ranjha* by Sheila Bhatia. Sheila based her libretto on Waris Shah's version of *Heer Ranjha*. She searched for folk melodies and chose thirty-five out of a vast treasure of Punjabi folk music She composed new tunes, half lines, small friezes of music and fitted them into a composition whose movement, rhythm, colour and dramatic stress corresponded to the story. Sheila's verse lacks the glow of good poetry. At places it has awkward and raw expressions but then an opera is not necessarily known for its literary quality *Heer Ranjha*, the first opera in Punjabi, opens new avenues for dramatic expression.

Apart from the above-mentioned groups and players there are half-a-dozen other playwrights. Roshan Lal Ahuja has written a number of historical and mythological plays. He, however, fails to discover new meanings in the old legends though he tries to do so. His sense of stage is weak and most of his plays are unstageable The same fault creeps into Gurdial Singh Phul's plays. They are sketchy and scrappy. A turn of phrase or an expression may wrest a smile from the spectators but there is hardly the strong drama in his works Amrik Singh, Balbir Singh, Jasooja, Paritosh Gargi, Dasanjh and a host of others have written plays, of which very few have been staged.

In the West plays are generally published after they have been a stage success. Even the old Parsee theatrical companies kept the faded manuscripts with them and published the play after it had been performed for years. The folk dramas have come down to us from generation to generation by the band of actors who bequeathed the lines to their sons or pupils and never bothered about publication In Punjabi I have known playwrights who finish their plays not in a theatre but in a printing press There are more plays published than ever performed. This tendency has led to a rift between the stage and the arm-chair playwright.

Side by side with amateur theatre there exist *swang* or *naqal*, the light farces enacted by Bhands, the village Buffoons Like the French *Chansonnier* who perform in late night cafés, the Bhands are shrewdness and intelligence masked in stupidity. Social oddities, topical comments, pungent jokes and mock interviews are enlivened with charmingly indecent and pointed remarks A master of wit the Buffoon is the younger brother of Vidushaka and a first cousin to Shakespeare's Fool. The folk players have an inherent theatrical sense Their creations and productions have become a part of our folk dramatic literature and have the same relation to drama as folk-songs to poetry

A word may be said about the Punjabi language Unlike Urdu and Hindi it has not been cut class-wise. A Punjabi peasant,

a city merchant, a shoe-maker and a high official speak the same language. This has given to the language an intensity and quality of hot colours. It is charged with images and has roots in the soil. The realistic tradition set by Nanda was so strong that the subsequent playwrights did not introduce songs in their plays in the traditional style. They had not to contrive situations for the heroine to sing. In the absence of songs in a play, experiments in musical dramas, operettas and verse plays were done separately. Verse and operas have not branched from the main trunk of musical melodramas but are independent growths. While the opera-form is taking shape and there are constant productions in villages and towns, the verse play has been limited only to intellectuals like Sant Singh Sekhon and Kartar Singh Duggal

Sant Singh Sekhon's *Baba Bohar* is more of a dramatic poem than a verse play. Kartar Singh Duggal's *Puranian Botlan* has sound dramatic structure but the quality of his verse is poor. Whereas it has always been a first-rate poet (for example, Shakespeare, Goethe, Tagore, Lorca, Brecht and T. S. Eliot) who has employed dramatic medium to express the intensity and smouldering passion of his characters, seldom has there been a poor poet successful in a verse play

There is not a single professional stage in Northern India Punjabi has never had one The amateur movement, born in colleges and clubs, is quite strong but the standard is poor. Stray efforts to give seriousness and some kind of polish to productions have been made by the Little Theatre Group and Delhi Art Theatre But they are only the beginnings. The Punjabi theatre is still a toddler.

*Balwant Gargi**

*The author who has modestly refrained from mentioning his contribution is a well-known Punjabi dramatist. Among his best known plays are *Loha-kut* (The Blacksmith) and *Kesro*. The latter has been translated and published into English as *The Earthen Lamp*. It has been successfully staged in Delhi (in Punjabi) and in Poland (in translation).—*Ed.*

TAMIL DRAMA

To understand Tamil drama as it is today, we have to remember the dramatic forms that were alive in Tamil at the beginning of the century. These were mainly three: 1. The music-play of the type of *Nandanar Charitra Kirtanai* and *Rama Natakam**, 2. the dance-play whose archetypes are found in the literary form of *Kuravanji*, *Pallu* and *Nondi Natakam*, and 3 the folk-play, a vigorous, if crude, medley of speech, music and dance. The first two kinds of play have claims to formal literary excellence. They have the artistry that we associate with a learned literary craftsman who knows and respects tradition. They are not, however, to be classified as mere studio pieces. They were designed for and accepted in the market place and the theatre

In the music-play and the dance-play, all the words were set to music More often than not, the words and the music were born together as one synthesis of expression. The themes of both these types of play were mostly religious The music-play generally attempted the rendering of a fairly long and satisfying story, either the life of a saint or a piece from a religious epic or *purana*, and presented it directly The dance-play, on the other hand, had very little of what can be called a plot. It took an idea and presented it symbolically through a stereotyped incident or two, conceived for the purpose, weaving elaborate embroideries round them. But both the plays have one thing in common their diction is more vigorous and direct and much simpler than that of the Tamil classics of the middle period and nearer the speech of the common man In this they anticipate the idiom of modern drama and pave the way for it. Also, in the dance-play, particularly in the *Kuravanji* and the *Pallu*, the life of common folk is presented In the *Kuravanji*, nomads

*The former is by Gopala Krishna Bharati and the latter by Arunachala Kavi. Both these plays were written much earlier but they represent a type that was living towards the close of the last century. Among the music and dance-plays are to be included the *mela* plays that were an annual feature in many villages, every village presenting the same play year after year.

of the hills figure as characters, while in the *Pallu*, tillers of the soil make their appearance. When this is done, the play sheds its symbolism and attempts a direct and vivid portrayal, though idealised, of chunks of real life. This, again, is an anticipation of the verisimilitude and presentation technique of the present.

The folk-play was distinctly on a lower literary level. Here too, probably because of the influence on it of the other two types of play, music dominated the scene. But it was not all music. Words as speech had a place in it. But the words, whether set to music or not, had no pretensions to literary quality. They were mostly improvised for the occasion by the actors themselves and where there was a script to be followed, it was 'more honoured in the breach than the observance' Actors were applauded for 'their' speeches, and the playwright, even if he existed, never came into the picture. The actor's 'gag', instead of being an accident or a necessity brought on to cover a slip of memory or an unexpected mistake on the stage, became the whole play. The themes of the folk-play were mostly chosen from the *puranas* and local folklore and history handed down by tradition. The treatment was of the simplest The characters were mostly types—kings, ministers, priests, peasants or labourers. There was no attempt at unity of impression, no structural coherence and no *dénouement* arising out of a chain of cause and effect. The dialogues of 'high-born' characters (whether *puranic* or semi-legendary or historical) were shifting dunes of conventional bombast. The play meandered on through the night, seemingly unending till the weary dawn. The redeeming feature came when the clown (every play had a clown) or a group of peasants or labourers as *dramatis personae* came on the improvised stage. Then suddenly, we were on the firm earth, the dialogue leapt into life and in rich dialect, the common man poured forth his heart in a convincing burst of humour or pathos or irony. Here, in these occasional patches of reality, lay the germ of the Tamil play of today.

The first progressive movement led Tamil drama towards natural-

ness and verisimilitude. This was largely the result of our contact with western literature, chiefly English. But this was retarded by the efforts of a few well-meaning scholars who took Shakespeare for their model but forgot that he wrote primarily for the stage and for the 'groundlings' of his time They remembered only the poetry and the blank verse of his plays and tried to create in Tamil plays in 'high' verse on the Shakespearean model. They adopted a diction made of choice literary words culled from old Tamil classics which while learned and in places even sonorous, had nothing of the ebb and flow of passion, the impress of mood and character which make for great dramatic work Nevertheless, these writers set a high standard and kept to an organised story with a beginning, middle and end They threw into the high and often grandiose speeches of the characters ethical and philosophical statements that had their own intrinsic value though they did not generally spring from the pressure of the dramatic context Examples of such efforts are Sundaram Pillai's *Manonmaniyam*, the greatest of this species, and Suryanarayana Sastri's *Mana Vijayam* and *Kalavati*

These efforts were a by-product of the movement towards naturalness and a realistic presentation of life. The writer who really contributed to the strengthening of this movement through years of devoted work both as a playwright and as an actor and the leader of a troupe—Suguna Vilasa Sabha—is P Sambanda Mudaliar, who fortunately, is still with us He wrote his plays for the stage, insisted on his words being memorised and spoken by the actors, tried to cut music out of the main action of the play, using it only occasionally to emphasise a situation or an atmosphere, attempted the creation of characters and the evolution of a story out of the manifold clashes of personality and circumstance He wrote many types of plays—romances like *Manohara*, farces like *Sabapati*, translations and adaptations like *Magapati* (Shakespeare's *Macbeth*) and *Amaladityan* (Shakespeare's *Hamlet*), social appraisals like *Birammanamum Suddiranum* (The Brahmin and the Sudra) It is too early to attempt an objective critical estimate of the literary merit of his work. It is true his plays are not rich

in poetry and his diction occasionally lacks colour and vividness and the compelling power of the inevitable word. Profundity of either psychology or philosophy in the treatment of the panorama of life, he seldom attempts. But he does not claim to do 'things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.' He achieves a certain quiet strength and unimpeachable verisimilitude through his urbanity and restraint. It is generally accepted that his plays—he has written over fifty of them—were eminently presentable and have held the stage for nearly two decades, that they brought about a revolution in the attitude to the theatre and made people realise the potentialities of the drama as an interpretation of life, that they lifted Tamil drama from the misty symbolisms of the musical and dance pastorals and the rough-and-tumble banalities of the folk-play, to clarity, dignity and significance, that he cleared the deck for the advent of the dramatist. Here, indeed, was a pioneer who went about his work without any fanfare and who, without any attitudinising or shouting, moved steadily on and opened the door to let contemporary drama in.

It has taken four decades for this movement, of which P. Sambanda Mudaliar was at once the symbol and the guide, to develop and it cannot be said that it has reached its fulfilment. But one thing is certain There is a great deal of creative activity in the field of Tamil drama today Many factors have contributed to it. It has been pointed out already that contact with foreign literature was one Many plays from English and European literature as also from Sanskrit and Hindi and Bengali have been translated or adapted Among these may be mentioned Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard*, Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Kalidasa's *Sakuntalam*, Sudraka's *Mriccakatika*, many plays by Shakespeare, Dwijendralal Roy's *Noor Jahan*, and a number of others. Some of these have been a success on the stage while others, if too strange and foreign to be directly appreciated by a wide public, have served as models for the young writer.

With the growth of nationalism, a new spirit of inquiry into our past and a desire to interpret and present our ancient glory came

in. These gave rise, at first, more to novels than plays, but later some of these novels like Kalki's *Parthipan Kanavu* and *Sivakamiyin Sabatham* have been cast into the form of plays. Good plays have been made out of other kinds of novels also, like *Gomathiyin Kathalan, Sampath* and *Tuppariyum Sambu*. Historical plays, like *Avvayar* and *Raja Raja Cholan,* of considerable literary value, have held and are still holding the stage. The spirit of social reform that came to birth along with the newly awakened political consciousness, gave rise to plays like *Gumastavin Penn* and *Velaikkari* and a large number of plays of varying merit, on the 'stifling chains' of caste and the inequalities of economic and social conditions leading to tragic or troubled lives.

The rise of a number of Tamil journals with very wide circulation and the growth of the All India Radio brought about a demand for short plays A large number of one-act plays on history, on biography and on contemporary social, economic and political conditions have been written and some of them are of considerable merit. Some of these are in verse and have been broadcast from the All India Radio. Mention may be made of Tiruloka Sitaram, S D S. Yogi, 'Turaivan' and 'Nanal' among the writers of verse-plays. Among writers of light social plays full of delicious humour may be mentioned Poornam Visvanathan and Gomathi Swaminathan. Among those who attempt more serious plays are. S D Sundaram, Ku. Sa Krishnamurti, M.Varadarajan, A Srinivasa Raghavan, Periaswami Thooran, C N. Annadurai and Aru Ramanathan. The playwright has now come into his own and has learnt to adapt his art for the stage or the screen or the radio. Curiously enough, music and dance from which the play began to turn away some four decades ago, have come back, though they are now controlled as aids to the playwright to create an emotional or artistic milieu. The dance-play has been revived through the efforts of Rukmini Arundale as a special dramatic form.

Though most of the plays are written in plastic and vital Tamil,

there is an unfortunate tendency to rhetorical perorations in many of the so-called 'social' plays and also a hankering after alliterative prose. But it is hoped that writers will soon recognise that writing of this kind will militate against the dramatic value of a play and that the shrill voice of propaganda (though art may be educative) spells the doom of a work of art.

The modern play has come to stay in Tamil. Many plays are being written in varied length, form, content and purpose. It cannot be claimed that all the work done is first-rate and will endure, though not a little of it is of high quality. But a great people with an ancient and distinguished literary tradition have re-discovered and shaped a literary instrument and are putting it to purposeful use. The endeavour is certain to bear fruit. It is only a question of time and of the advent (that can never be predicted, it can only be hoped for) of a genius.*

A. Srinivasa Raghavan

TELUGU DRAMA

Theatrical entertainment for audiences in Andhra at the beginning of the present century consisted mainly of dance-drama enacted by votaries of the *Kuchipudi* style who portrayed familiar themes from the *Puranas* in traditional dance accompanied by song and cymbals. There were also itinerant groups of actors who entertained village audiences with their humorous sketches and impersonation of familiar rural personalities.

Two influences brought about the stage proper in Andhra towards the end of the nineteenth century. The frequent visits

*It has not been possible because of considerations of space to mention all the playwrights or to make a reference to all contemporary plays worthy of note. The omission is unavoidable and regretted.

of Parsee Theatrical Companies from Bombay encouraged local talent to start productions on similar lines with elaborate costumes and lilting tunes, which were exact copies of the Parsee Theatre music. Side by side with this influence, there came the impetus from the Dharwar School of Maharashtra which, taking advantage of earlier cultural contacts between Andhra and Maharashtra, soon built up a popular theatre in the Telugu area. Prominent among the pioneers in this field was the Surabhi Company which was composed mostly of women actors, whose active participation on the stage, it is said, in no way interfered with their attending to their regular domestic chores. A little later, drama troupes were set up in most of the bigger towns and plays began to be written specially intended for enacting by a particular group. The three great storehouses of our culture, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Srimad Bhagavatham* supplied plots for these dramas Translations from the Sanskrit plays were also in vogue. Audiences have been known to go into raptures over a production of *Sakuntala* where Dushyanta and Kanwa recite *slokas* from the original Sanskrit followed by Telugu rendering in verse of each *sloka* This play was written by the celebrated writer and social reformer, Kandukuri Veeresalingam

Vedam Venkataraya Sastri, from Nellore, was responsible for highly artistic rendering of several well-known Sanskrit plays His Telugu version of Sri Harsha's *Nagananda* and Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasiya* were famous. Venkataraya Sastri also gave to the Telugu world the unique play *Pratapa Rudreeyam* The character of Yugandhara, the talented Minister of Prataparudra, created by him some forty years back, is held in much esteem even today. Of outstanding merit during those years were plays written by Dharmavaram Krishnamacharyulu whose numerous dramatic works kept the stage alive for nearly twenty-five years —almost till the onset of the cinema and the talkie. Another play of the stage type but very different from the rest was *Radhakrishna* by Panuganti Lakshminarasimham. Here the characterisation of Radha is a remarkable feat in dramatisation and the play

abounds in situations of sheer poetry. The beautiful verses included in the play continue to have universal appeal even today.

Somanathavijayam, one of the earliest one-act plays in Telugu, ably written by Nori Narasimha Sastry (about the year 1920) was unique in its treatment of the invader Ghazni not as a mere fanatical idol-breaker, but as an iconoclast with a mission—that of destroying rank superstition and blind faith and restoring truth to its original pedestal

About the same time, Chinta Dikshitulu published two excellent one-act plays, *Sabari* and *Ahalya*, both of which emphasise the universal devotion to Sri Rama. The author has proved here how effective well-written dialogue could be in conveying even the profoundest thought, as contrasted with the hitherto popular stage-plays seething with song and verse.

Guruzada Appa Rao, the father of modern Telugu prose is remembered mainly by his famous prose-play, *Kanyasulkamu*, which has been translated into other Indian languages and also into English It is a powerful social drama couched in regional dialect, mercilessly attacking imposture of any type.

Gudapati Venkatachalam, a famous writer of vigorous prose, also gave us some memorable one-act prose-plays. His *Chitrangi*, a subtle variation of a popular theme, arrested attention on account of his capacity to express twentieth century thought through the utterances and actions of characters taken from a by-gone age. So also his *Savitri*, *Sasanka*, *Pururavas* and *Anuradha*. His style is direct, utterly uninhibited and therefore always vigorous.

The outstanding play of the year 1923 was *Anarkali* written by Viswanatha Satyanarayana. This is a remarkable work which, in spite of two more versions of the same theme by other writers, continues to fill an honoured place in our repertoire

of plays of great literary merit. *Nartanasala*, another play of the same author, depicts the rescue of Draupadi from the hands of Keechaka. Although the main theme is taken from the *Mahabharata*, the dramatist has shown remarkable originality in characterisation. The dialogue is eloquent and the appropriate verses are of great lyrical value.

P. V. Rajamannar is a well-known playwright. His *Dayyala Lanka* (Island of Ghosts) has been staged with great success. Written when he was a rising lawyer and an idealist who could express himself freely, the play deals with a social problem of great concern—the state of the young widow who sees all the urges of youth freely accessible to her married sister but which, for no justifiable reason, are denied to her A second play of Rajamannar, *Yemi Magavallu* (Oh, These Men!) is a powerful condemnation of obsolete yet tenaciously clinging ideas of propriety and the still popular insistence on one law for the man and another for the woman.

Nagu Bamu (The White Cobra) is a recent one-act play by him. The story takes place in the Ajanta caves during the times when the great Buddhist monk-artists embellished the walls with their wonderful frescoes. The dialogue is very effective throughout, and the problem has a universal and almost topical appeal as it concerns the conflict between utter devotion to duty and the irresistible urge for emotional fulfilment—a problem which confronts each one of us today In all his writings, Rajamannar follows Franz Kafka's advice. 'Test yourself on Humanity. It makes the doubtful doubt, the believer believe.'

Another playwright who is very forceful is V. R. Narla. The theme of one of his most remarkable plays, *Vantena* (The Bridge), namely, how the completion of a small bridge brings about a social upheaval, is of universal interest. Values cherished for years as permanent are changed overnight. Of equally arresting appeal are the other plays of Narla contained in his collection, *Kotha Gaddha* (Fresh Land). Particular mention may be

made of the play, *Prarabdham* (Fruits of Destiny), wherein the playwright wields the pen with remarkable power to focus attention on a current social problem, the tyranny of the male. The present set-up in the Hindu home, particularly in the village, is such that woman is still a chattel to be disposed of according to the whim of the husband. Here the husband infects his wife with an incurable disease and instead of having her medically treated returns her to her parents with the cruel words: 'Go back to the man from whom you acquired it (the disease).' The parental home is depicted in masterly detail and the characters are typical—the pretentious father who endlessly recites scriptures in support of an irritatingly fatalistic philosophy, the tender mother who eats her heart out for her unhappy daughter, the fiery youth, her son, who is bent on avenging the mortal hurt to his beloved sister, and a teen-age girl who speaks little and yet fills the canvas with her innocent charm. The problem is presented with incisive candour. The dialogue moves with amazing rapidity and we are, heart and soul, in sympathy with the unfortunate victim of a cruel injustice. The end is rather sudden and unexpected, though one realises that it could not have been otherwise.

Atreya's *Addekompalu* (Rented Hovels) depicting the vicissitudes in the life of a middle-class family—in this case that of a Government Servant—living in the city has lately been very popular on the 'Reformed Stage.'

A young dramatist of great promise is 'Buchibabu', who brings to his art the rich culture from the Telugu classics, with a deep study of the dramatic art as developed in the West His *Tishyarakshita* depicts, from the purely humanistic standpoint, the escapist and puritan tenets in King Asoka's religious faith. The play presents with great sympathy the tragic character of King Asoka's young queen who runs counter to the prevalent current of thought and custom. The play was included in the first published anthology of one-act plays in Telugu, and has been staged at Cultural Festivals with great success. *Omar*

Khayyam by the same author depicts the salient features in the life of the well-known philosopher-poet. *Darini Poye Danayya*, a popular play of 'Buchibabu', deals in a humorous vein with the exploits of a young social reformer and incidentally exposes the foibles of certain contemporary types of people. *Atmavanchana* (Self-deception) has been staged several times and adjudged the best play of the year 1950 in that year's session of the Andhra Nataka Kala Parishat It contrasts the view-points of two unmarried sisters who, though highly educated, have yet to learn à great deal from real life

'Buchibabu' is very fond of experimenting *Thera Padani Natakamu* (The Play Where the Curtain Never Falls) deals with the fancies of an imaginary king who insists on having knowledge distilled into a single sentence, as he finds little time to read the multitude of books around him Wisdom comes too late and the king dies ridiculed by his own clown *Nalugo Parimanamu* (The Fourth Dimension) depicts the nightmare lived through by a student of mathematics on the eve of his marriage By a curious projection of his mind into the yet-unborn future, the student finds himself already married and the father of a son. *Manasa Vacha* is also in experimental vein Here the utterance of each character is followed by a sotto voce by the same character telling us the real truth, as *felt* and not as *expressed.*

Regarding verse-play, two notable examples only have so far been published One is *Sita Koka Chiluka* by the talented Surrealist 'Arudra'. He demonstrates what a powerful medium free-verse can be when employed by an able pen A young man, a would-be bridegroom, is asked to choose from among four brides-elect whose claims are pressed before him; but, however tempting their offers, he finally selects the ideal girl of his own choice who does not have any of these coveted attributes.

Asa (Hope), another play in free-verse is by 'Kundurthi.' This is unique in having Time, History, and Hope as participating

characters. It is understood that the play was received with enthusiasm when enacted before a select audience recently.

Much is being done in several directions to enrich modern Telugu drama and to perfect the prose-play It has to be admitted, however, that the mass of the people are still partial to the orthodox type whose *Puranic* themes continue to hold sway over their emotions Well-written prose-plays have appealed only to the educated audience and that, too, to a limited extent. A tremendous and concerted effort would be necessary before drama, in its modern form, can establish itself before Telugu audiences.*

A Janaki Ram

URDU DRAMA

How delightful are earlier memories of Urdu drama and stage! Over forty years ago, round about 1912 when I was a little boy, probably the most exciting event in a life which was otherwise drab and even gloomy—for, from early morning till late in the evening I used to be caught up in a round of prayers, recitation of the *Quran*, study and memorising of obscure treatises of theology and grammar in Arabic and Persian in the Maktab of a stern Maulavi—was the arrival of Alfred Theatrical Company or the New Alfred Theatrical Company in the town (Lucknow). Weeks before the actual arrival of the wandering players of the Theatrical Company organised by Parsi entrepreneurs from Bombay, the whole town would be plastered with posters announcing the forthcoming event; 'Aa rahi hai! Aa rahi hai!! Aa rahi hai!!! (It is coming!) with 'New Grand Equipment' and

*This review does not cover the contribution to Telugu drama of the radio-play, which is considerable, and would have to be dealt with separately.

'Magnificent Scenes' and these would be followed by the names of plays: *Safed Khoon* (*lit* Blood turned White, *i.e.*, betrayal by near and dear ones) or *King Lear; Khubsoorat Bala* (Beautiful Calamity); *Aseer-e-Hirs* (Prisoner of Greed), etc. The popular singer-actors in these companies were for some strange reason called 'Masters' *e.g.*, Master Mohan; the star actress—there used to be not more than one in one company—'Miss'—thus Miss Gauhar, Miss Zohra; the outstanding comedian in the New Alfred was Sohrabji (called 'comic-actor' in Urdu). Strangely enough, the least was known or talked about the playwright. It was only much later, when studying Urdu literature that I came to know the names of these—Agha Hashr Kashmiri, Ahsan of Lucknow, Munshi Vinayak Prashad 'Talib' of Banaras, Pandit Narain 'Betab' and others less well known These are the prominent dramatists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and of these Agha Hashr, son of a Kashmiri carpet merchant settled in Banaras, was the most outstanding

Though shunned by 'high' Indian society and the westernised upper classes, these travelling Parsi theatres from Bombay were highly popular The middle class, the rakish intelligentsia, shopkeepers, students, artisans, workers of various trades (specially the *ekkawalas* and the *tongawalas*) would flock to the theatre in their hundreds and sit through the long performance, from 9 in the evening to 2 or 2-30 in the morning, *i e*, over five hours! The gayest and most uproarious part of the audience naturally consisted of those who had taken the four-anna and eight-anna tickets (the *chavanni-walas* as they were contemptuously called by the well-to-do and the white-clad Babus) and who sat on hard, wooden, rickety benches in scurried rows at the farthest end On one side, set apart from the main hall, behind delicate coloured bamboo curtains (*chilman*, as it is called in Urdu) sat the *purdah* ladies invisible to the male audience The Theatre itself, the only one in Lucknow, was a ramshackle structure of corrugated iron sheets, lighted by gas lamps. At one end of it was the creaky wooden stage, on which hung crudely painted curtains pulled laboriously up and down by ropes. The footlights, also of gas,

were there for all to see, fixed right in front of the first row. In the space between the first row—the special class, where dilapidated old sofas were arranged in a row—and the stage, on a slightly lower level sat the orchestra, consisting of two individuals, a harmonium- and a *tabla* player.

I would coax my mother (herself living in heavy *purdah*) to let me go to see the show accompanied by an elderly, unemployed, poor relative, who was himself a bit of a *bon viveur*. Father, far too respectable and notable a gentleman, would not think of going himself, but left it to mother to look after our morals. So the great event would come about, and almost sick with joy and excitement, I would accompany my uncle to the theatre. Such occasions arose not oftener than twice or thrice in a year, but even today, as I write these lines after more than four decades, how fresh and vivid is the memory of it! Colour and music and a wondrous felicity it added to one's life, not only to mine but, I am sure, to that of the great multitude who flocked to the theatre in those days to witness the performance of these theatrical companies in all the principal towns of India

The theme of the plays was taken from anywhere: Shakespeare's plays changed beyond recognition; old Indian legends and stories from the *Arabian Nights*, (*e g*, Raja Harischandra, Princess Bakaoli and the Magic Flower), classical Persian romances (*e g*., Shirin-Farhad), etc. One was transported to a world of kings, lovely princesses, heroes, and evil men and women, joined in mortal combats of Good and Evil—crude, simple and direct The costumes were a fantastic mixture of medieval modes of Indian aristocracy and Elizabethan style. There was nothing of realism in these plays, as we understand that word to-day. Neither was the dialogue in the play realistic Declaimed in a highly artificial and loud pitch, the rhymed prose of the dialogue was liberally interspersed with songs and dances. If a comparison must be made with European plays, our drama, during this period, was nearer the opera than the modern drama. Its artistic merit was negligible, both from the point of view of content and

technique. On the other hand, there emerged out of this rough *melée* of legend, didactic prose, popular Indian songs, melodies and dances, burlesque, satire and melodrama something elemental popular and, above all, extremely Indian.

Urdu drama proper, it is popularly believed, owes its origin to the patronage of the gay King of Oudh, Wajid Ali Shah, who also patronised the charming and sensuous Kathak style of dance and the light, rippling music of *thumri* and *dadra*. The story goes in Lucknow that he had asked one 'Amanat' to compose the famous dance- and song-drama, *Indra Sabha*, wherein Indra, the god of music, dance and merriment, watches in his court the frolics of his favourite red and green *parees* (fairies) Until a pontifical professor disproved it to his satisfaction, all Lucknow fondly imagined that Wajid Ali (*Rangiley Pia Jan-a-Alam*—the merry, beloved soul of the world, as Wajid Ali was fondly called in Lucknow) used himself to play the role of Indra, the part of fairies was played by the fair ladies of his court. However, Amanat's *Indra Sabha*, written in 1853, became very popular and was repeatedly staged. There is little doubt that the playwrights who wrote and composed for the Parsi Theatrical Companies of Bombay and who were mostly Urdu writers from the U P drew a great deal of inspiration from *Indra Sabha* which in its turn was based on traditional Indian burlesque, played by professional troupes attached to the courts of Indian princes Unhappily, towards the third decade of the present century, the Parsi Theatrical Companies ceased to exist, bequeathing their tradition and talent to the newly-founded cinema industry in Bombay and Calcutta Both the strength (its immense popularity) and the weakness of modern Indian cinema based in Bombay (its jejune, unrealistic content) perhaps derive from this root The Urdu theatre in the twentieth century had the financial backing neither of the enterprising capitalists nor of the state. So it withered away

Plays, however, continued to be written—meant only for amateurs. Of these, only one, *Anarkali*, by Imtiaz Ali Taj of

Lahore, is of any merit. It depicts the story of the unfortunate maiden of that name in the court of Akbar who was sentenced to death by the emperor for the crime of loving Prince Salim.

During the second world war, the Indian People's Theatre was started Talented amateurs, some of whom have since become popular stars, like Balraj Sahni, Zohra Sehgal and others, acted in the two modern plays written by Khawja Ahmed Abbas (*Zubaida*) and Sardar Jafri (*Yeh Kiska Khoon Hai?*). The theme of these plays was modern and socio-political and the presentation realistic, nevertheless they are more of historical than of intrinsic importance. The Jamia Millia of Delhi also has presented plays written by some of its professors (Abid Hussain and Mujeeb) regularly during its annual celebrations, but they lack vitality and passion and suffer from the faults of amateurishness

It is significant that nearly all the notable modern writers of Urdu fiction—Rajinder Singh Bedi, Saadat Hasan Manto, Krishan Chander, Ismat Chugtai, Mahinder Nath, Upendra Nath 'Ashk', Jilani Banu, and others as well as those writing in Urdu across the border in Pakistan like Mirza Adeeb, Ahmed Nadim, Qasmi, Hajira Masroor and others, have written and continue to write one-act plays Many of these plays have been written for radio broadcast, but they also provide a rich repertoire for amateurs and are constantly played by college and university students Some of these plays are excellent and deal not only with intricate psychological problems of the modern man in a modern way but also with the most burning political and social problems of our country Nevertheless, they are more literary than dramatic achievements. Basically the dictum of J.B. Priestly remains true, namely, that 'a play that has never found a theatre, actors, audiences, is not really a play at all A dramatist is a writer who works in and for a theatre....a dramatist must have actors and audiences in order to realise himself· thus he must come to terms with the theatre of his time.'

Judged by these standards, the place of honour in the field of contemporary Urdu drama must be given to Prithvi Raj Kapoor and his Prithvi Theatres, Bombay. Fighting against heavy odds, this outstanding actor, dramatist and producer-manager has built up a professional theatrical company and has written and produced plays which, whatever their literary merit, have made themselves felt. His repertoire consists of *Pathan*, *Diwar*, *Paisa*, *Ghaddar* and *Kisan*—all dealing with contemporary social and moral problems Prithvi Raj's towering personality dominates his theatre

Recently, through the efforts of Begum Qudsia Zaidi of Delhi, another theatrical troupe, the Hindustani Theatre, has been set up in the capital. Its first performance was of Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* in Urdu Despite these brave and laudable efforts, it is too early to predict the future of Urdu drama.

Sajjad Zaheer

Theatre at Delhi Today

Muriel Wasi

It is hard to believe that the capital of India that was noticeably free of cultural activity before 1947 should have flowered into a city that is now in danger of being altogether too 'cultural' Some flowering of artistic talent might have been expected upon the birth of independence, but few people can have foreseen the cornucopia of artistic achievement that has followed the departure of the British and that in its present state of exuberance presents a picture of bewildering plenty

I do not think that this chaotic energy is a bad thing, far from it. Only out of such cultural abundance can something like a form emerge that will represent not Bengal or Maharashtra alone, nor Madras and the Punjab alone, nor Rajasthan and Kerala but that India in which we so proudly claim that unity persists in diversity, and that holds within her a core of artistic integrity that must survive to proclaim a nation

I am interested less in the rebirth of Indian artistic energy in painting and sculpture, music and dance than I am in the emergence of theatre at Delhi The other arts have suffered some setback during the centuries in which creative art bowed to political manoeuvring, but no art has suffered the almost complete eclipse that overtook drama. To talk of drama as an art by itself and as distinct from dance and music with which it has been so closely linked up, is neither realistic nor historical. Nevertheless this is what I propose to do—for today theatre at Delhi presents us with the not uninteresting and instructive spectacle of an art seeking to stand up by itself and to incorporate into its growing forms what it needs of the sister arts, without endangering its claims to be theatre *per se*

Early in 1950 it was possible to talk not quite of the Delhi Stage but of theatre in Delhi. There were a large number of rather formless, abortive amateur theatrical groups that lacked

direction more than talent and organisation more than finance. The concept of organisation for amateur theatre existed. There was the local branch of Theatre Centre (India)—the Delhi Natya Sangh—that provided the framework for the collective working of friendly amateur groups*. There was the Little Theatre Group that had become the focus of some spirited planning and production In time, though somewhat later, there came into being the Unity Theatre formed out of a nucleus of thinking people at the University of Delhi and some ardent spirits in All India Radio. College dramatic societies existed and functioned more or less regularly—the Shakespeare Society of St. Stephen's College was among the more stable of these and its annual performance of a Shakespearean Comedy or Tragedy was advertised and received with the expectation and recognition given to a good periodical. More recently Inter-University Youth Festivals have provided a special stage for student drama The Amateur Dramatic Society of the United Kingdom High Commission offered amusing theatrical fare, though the purpose of its productions was more often to entertain the staff of the High Commission than to amuse the public of Delhi (it frequently succeeded in doing both) The Army Headquarters Amateur Dramatic Group appeared to model itself upon the UK COM society though it sometimes staged a Moghul play more worthy in intention than in execution Then, there were various local groups that performed in regional languages Some of these such as the Maharashtriya Natya Samuha were part of the Delhi Natya Sangh, that was affiliated to Theatre Centre (India), and through it, to the International Theatre Institute of Unesco There were groups that performed in Bengali and Punjabi The Delhi Arts Society with a strong character of its own that it imparted to the highly-flavoured and frequently very vital productions it put on, acted in Punjabi All in all, no one could have asked for theatre more truly representative of the languages and peoples of India. Still, nothing like *national* theatre had emerged.

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*One of the earliest amateur groups in the field was the Delhi branch of the Indian National Theatre which put on the stage, in Hindi version, Tagore's plays, *Natir Puja* and *Tasher Desh*, as early as 1947-48.—*Ed.*

What were the main problems of the many groups that I have mentioned? I suggested earlier that these groups lacked direction and organisation I use 'direction' not so much in the sense of the person or persons responsible for producing drama, as for those who think out the policy in terms of drama of such struggling groups. In order to understand these problems it is necessary to consider the composition of the average Delhi amateur theatrical group It consists of people in various walks of life, academic, business, official, secretarial and artistic. These people work a full day at the jobs on which they earn a living. Then, weary but ardent they go to committee meetings to plan dramatic productions Portfolios of activity are allotted by someone better at organising than the rest and rehearsals start. A producer is discovered (who is a full-time worker elsewhere like everybody else) who will be willing to give up his other forms of leisure for the space of, shall we say, a month He impresses upon his group the need for disciplined rehearsals, good timing, the importance of team work Everybody has heard this a dozen times before and when production starts, every one intends to be good and play But plans don't always work out Productions timed for winter run over into spring, for autumn into winter Something has gone wrong somewhere

However, the important thing is that something comes off, even if it does come late, and even if, when it appears, it is not as good as it was expected to be Amateur theatre goes on. Only it remains amateur

I can look back today on a variety of productions, some indifferent, some bad, some good, a few outstanding I remember *Vivah Bandhan* that the Indraprastha Natya Mandal put on in 1950—in Hindustani. Translated from the Marathi original, this little comedy was produced by R G Anand who has since become a household word in Delhi theatre. It was evident even seven years ago that Anand's productions had a vitality, a pace and a flavour that must endure. Whether or not they would improve in finish and sophistication, no one could then say,

but here was something of the soil that might count on growing. It belonged. At about the same time or perhaps a little later I saw the Unity Theatre in the imaginative hands of Frank Thakurdas produce Cocteau's *The Eagle Has Two Heads* in a Ronald Duncan translation I knew that something existed here that was also native to Delhi (though not perhaps to India) in spite of the fact that the Group chose to act a French play translated by a British dramatist The English spoken by the cast of the Cocteau play was not perhaps the English of amateur British societies in England, but it was sufficiently good English to impress a public accustomed to use English as an intellectual language. The Unity Theatre was earmarked by those who watch growing theatre as another society from which good drama might be expected

Drama in Hindustani in the meanwhile flourished among a number of groups and the Indian National Theatre at Delhi took the lead in many of these, absorbing talent such as R. G. Anand's with productions of contemporary interest like *Elections* and *Hum Hindustani*, etc Few people can have foreseen that Anand who had set out with an unbounded relish for producing lively comedy would soon become a serious commentator about what stood between nationhood and the people who claimed to be a nation With a camera, at once human and critical, Anand dared Delhi to look at itself He set a Madrasi family alongside a Punjabi family and asked them how they expected a nation to emerge if they fell out over a triviality such as the marriage of the son of one family to the daughter of the other. He held the mirror up to an Election campaign to show Delhi how enticing and how unutterably degraded politics and politicians could be—arguing always, and never very quietly —that politics in a democracy is an evil necessity In 1957 he staged *Dilli Jalli* with a vivid portrait of the mutineers of 1857

So far many amateur groups had tended to go outside—sometimes outside Delhi but more often outside India—for their

plays Everyone complained about the shortage of suitable plays. Anand's retort was to write plays that were slices of real life in India. If they had a defect, it was that they were too near real life to be great drama. Their chief virtue was, on the other hand, just the vital realism that good camera studies achieve over painted portraits.

It was not easy in the earlier stages of amateur theatre to run a play for more than two nights. After its first Winter Festival that lasted three months and included eight dramatic productions in 1951-52, Theatre Centre (India) found that it was possible to run a production well staged and advertised for three, five and even thirteen nights Audiences were being built up as well as acting groups, and the public of Delhi began to read dramatic criticism as it had read, and indeed still reads, film reviews Competition of an entirely healthy nature helped to raise standards. There were perhaps too many groups for economic or good production but the chaotic spirit that must bring a new dramatic production into being, was already at work

The Unity theatre did not miss an Autumn or a Winter season I can remember seeing three one-act plays on two occasions that included Chekhov's *Bear* and Souter's *A Marriage Has Been Arranged* and Terence Rattigan's *The Browning Version.* It attempted, not perhaps very successfully, an out-of-the-way thriller, *Bonaventure.* It then got braver and produced, and this was very recently, Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge* As I sat watching this, touched in spite of myself, for I have refused to judge amateur performances except by professional standards, I remembered that the same group had some years ago produced Christopher Fry's *The First-born* with the same poignancy, the same urgent sense of drama, the same magnificent cohesion—and I wondered that any one could be depressed for the future of Delhi's theatre in the English language.

One of the great fillips to theatre at Delhi has been the wisdom

of such bodies as the British Council Through them we have been able to see, hear and for ever remember Sybil Thorndike and Lewis Cassons and Marius Goring An American repertory troupe brought us Tenessee Williams' *Glass Menagerie* and the Wayne University Theatre the plays of Eugene O 'Neill and Thornton Wilder. Not all of this is of the same immortal standard, but all of it is a stimulant to better production, acting and theatre.

Perhaps the impetus provided by visiting professionals has led us to see how much we need professional theatre, Bengal has professional theatre, so has Maharashtra* The only attempt, as yet abortive, to give Delhi professional theatre appears not to have met with great success in the recent staging of *Sakuntala* I did not see this, but a solitary press report apart, press and public appear to have agreed that it was neither professional nor well-advised in choice or presentation of language Certainly the need to have professional theatre is realised The fact that we are not satisfied with what has been done is also heartening It means probably that we are on the verge of creating a standard in dramatic productions To this end the symposia that the Bharatiya Natya Sangh—Theatre Centre (India)—runs will give strength and perhaps enlightenment Now that the Asian Theatre Institute, organised by the Bharatiya Natya Sangh with expert assistance from Unesco, is in being we know that the long trek towards a Stage that Delhi can call her own, is on and that nothing but our own mistakes of exaggerated and destructive individualism can hold back the promise of that regular, daily theatre that has been the dream of so many hundreds of people who have worked for theatre at Delhi.

*The annual Drama Festivals organised by the All India Radio have enabled the people of Delhi to see plays in various regional languages as also in Sanskrit, staged by professional and semi-professional troupes from other parts of India.—*Ed.*

Books in Bengali

In November 1956 the Sahitya Akademi had organised an Exhibition of Indian Literature where books in all the major languages of India covering a variety of subjects were exhibited. Each language section formed a sort of visual bibliography of the reading material available in that language, excluding ephemeral literature. The bibliography was by no means complete, since only such books as were available in the market or on loan from libraries could be exhibited. But such as it was, the effort was widely commended and many scholars and lovers of books suggested that the lists of books exhibited subject-wise should be printed for the benefit of the general reader. It is in response to this request that these lists are being published serially and language-wise, in alphabetical order, in this journal. The list of Assamese books was published in the last issue (October 1957). The present issue contains the list of Bengali books.

It is important to bear in mind that the lists include only such books as were actually exhibited. No claim is made as to their bibliographical value A full and proper bibliography of books published in Indian languages in the twentieth century is under preparation and is expected to be ready next year.

Our thanks are due to Subhendhusekhar Mukhopadhyaya of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad for his valuable assistance in organising the Bengali section of the Exhibition and to the authorities of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the Serampore College, Visva-Bharati and other societies, publishers, book-sellers and individuals.—*Ed.*

BENGALI

Bengali, a member of the Indic group of the Aryan branch of the Indo-European family of languages, has been in existence as an independent and characterized language for nearly ten centuries. It is about fifty years ago that the great savant,

Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Shastri, brought from Nepal a manuscript which is reputed to contain the earliest specimens of Bengali language. The published work was given the title *Hajar Bacharer Purana Bangla Bhasay Bauddha Gan O Doha* (Buddhist songs and couplets in the Bengali language a thousand years old) Some of the verses (Charya songs) contained in the book seem to have been composed in the second half of the tenth century.

The next great landmark in the development of Bengali is the *Sri Krishna Kirtan* of Chandidas. Chandidas who is believed to have lived in the fourteenth century was one of the first great poets of Bengal His great contemporary, Vidyapati, wrote in Maithili. Vidyapati's literary heritage has enriched both Bengali and Hindi literatures.

The influence of the great Bengali saint, Chaitanya Dev (1485-1533), on Bengali life and literature was considerable. Bengali language and literature were fully established by the end of the sixteenth century with a number of works which have become the classics of the language. They include most of the Vaishnava lyrics and biographical works, devotional narrative poems (*Mangal Kavya*), *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* The *Ramayana* was rendered into Bengali by Krittibas in the middle of the fifteenth century. This is perhaps the most widely-read book in average Bengali family even today The *Mahabharata* of Kashiram Das was written in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Vaishnava literature includes the lyrics of Chandidas and Vidyapati of pre-Chaitanya period and of Jnanadas, Balaramadas and Govindadas after Chaitanya

Biography as a genre was added to Bengali literature with *Chaitanya Bhagabat* of Brindabandas and *Chaitanya Charitamrita* of Krishnadas Kaviraj which are admired for their literary excellence and historical significance even today. *Mangala Kavyas* were traditional lyric-*cum*-narrative folk poetry presented in a new literary form. Mukundaram's *Chandi Mangal*, Vipra-

dasa's *Manasa Mangal* and Ruparani's *Dharma Mangal* are the best of this genre. Bharatchandra's *Annada Mangal*, a very popular work, perhaps marks the end of pre-British Bengali literature of the eighteenth century.

Modern Bengali literature grew under the impact of English education and western influence in the first half of the nineteenth century. Iswar Gupta (1812-1869) was a representative poet of the first half of that century. But the actual renaissance was brought about by the social and cultural movements led by Raja Rammohun Roy (1774-1833) and later Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891). Their great contribution in literature was the introduction of prose in Bengali. The publications of the Serampore Mission in the first half of the nineteenth century helped in the development of Bengali prose The results of renaissance are very easily detected in the works of Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) and Bankimchandra (1838-1894). *Nildarpan* (1860) of Dinabandhu Mitra, *Meghnadbadh-kavya* (1861) of Madhusudan and the novels of Bankimchandra are some of the landmarks of this new phase in literature. In the latter part of that century, literature was further enriched by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), whose genius is unsurpassed in modern Indian literature Saratchandra Chattopadhyaya (1876 - 1937), a junior contemporary of Tagore, is one of the most popular modern novelists. Bengali prose has undergone a great change since the days of Ramram Basu's *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra* (1801), the first literary prose work in Bengali and the earliest original book printed entirely in the Bengali script.

Establishment of the printing press was a great impetus to the development of modern literature on varied subjects. European scholars and Missionaries deserve credit for their ventures in this field. The first printed Bengali book came out in 1800 under their direct initiative. It was a translation of St. Mathew's Gospel. The earliest specimen of Bengali printing is found in Halhed's *A Grammar of Bengal Language* (1878), printed at Hooghly.

The first dictionary in India was printed in 1793 (*A. Upiohn's Bengali-English Vocabulary*) at Calcutta. The *Ramayana* of Krittibas was published from Serampore in 1802-1803. The first illustrated printed book in Bengali is Bharatchandra's *Oonoodah Mangul* (1816). In the course of a century, Bengali printing has achieved a fairly high standard, as was evident from some of the books exhibited.

A bilingual encyclopedia, *Vidyakalpadruma*, was brought out by the Rev K. M Banerjee between 1846 and 1850. The first authoritative encyclopedia in Bengali, *Viswakosha* in 22 volumes, was edited by Nagendranath Basu between 1883 and 1911. A Hindi edition was also published There are several remarkable encyclopedias, dictionaries and other reference books in Bengali. *Yantrakosha*, a treasury of the old and modern musical instruments, by Sourindramohan Tagore, was published in 1875 *Sishu Bharati*, a book of knowledge in ten volumes for young readers by Jogendranath Gupta, *Bangla Prabad* (1952), a collection of proverbs in Bengali compiled by Sushil Kumar De, *Bijnan Bharati* (1954), a dictionary of scientific terms in Bengali by Debendranath Biswas are some of the important recent publications

In the section on religious and philosophical literature, attention is drawn to the philosophical works of Rammohun (*Vedanta O Upanishad*), Rameshchandra Dutta (*Veda*), Bankimchandra (*Krishna Charitra*) and Hirendranath Datta (*Upanishad*) Ishanchandra Ghose's *Jataka* (1916-30) in six volumes, translated from original Pali, and *Kural*, a Tamil classic, translated by Nalinimohan Sanyal, deserve special mention

Bengali can claim a number of historical books of importance. The first printed Bengali book was, incidentally, of historical interest It is noteworthy that the history of the Punjab, *Panjabetihas*, was written by Rajnarain Bhattacharya in 1847, when Ranjit Singh was still alive. *Siphaijuddher Itihas* (1879) in five volumes, by Rajanikanta Gupta and *Banglar Itihas* (1914-

15) in two volumes, by Rakhaldas Banerjee, are two important early works. In Bengali there are some good histories of the different districts of Bengal. *Bangalir Itihas* by Nihar Ranjan Roy is a significant recent work on cultural history of the Bengali. Brajendranath Banerjee's *Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala* and other works have a permanent value in the study of nineteenth century Bengal.

Bengali publications on Social and Physical Sciences, though not of any original importance, have served to propagate science in the mother tongue Early works on the various physical sciences, such as Jogeshchandra Vidyanidhi's *Rasayan Prabesh* (1890) are significant. The scientific works of Ramendrasundar Trivedi, Jagadananda Roy and Jagadishchandra Bose are distinguished by real literary quality *Bijnaner Itihas* (1955), a history of science by Samarendranath Sen, is an important recent addition to Bengali literature on science.

The section on Literature proper was necessarily very selective. The limited space of the Exhibition could not do justice to this section. That is why many of the recent publications could not be included Pains were taken to represent all the branches of literature chronologically to show the developments in each section.

Special mention has to be made of the section on Children's Literature Children's Literature in Bengali is particularly rich with the contributions of Rabindranath, Abanindranath and Sukumar Roy. Books by Rabindranath Tagore have not been included in the following list, as they were exhibited as a separate section in themselves.

ANTHROPOLOGY & SOCIOLOGY

1. *Adyer Gambira*, Haridas Palit, 1319 BS
2. *Banger Jatiya Itihas*, Nagendranath Bose, 1313 BS
3. *Banglar Brata*, Abanindranath Tagore
4. *Bharatbarshiya Upasak Sampraday*, Akshoy Kumar Datta, 1888.

5. *Bharater Adivasi*, Subodh Ghosh.
6. *Bharatiya Samaj Paddhati*, Bhupendranath Datta
7 *Chithipatre Samaj Chitra*, Panchanan Mandal.
8 *Europio Sabhyatar Itihas*, Tr , Gizzo.
9 *Hindu Rashtrer Gathan*, Binoy Sarkar.
10 *Hindusamajer Garan*, Nirmal Kumar Bose.
11 *Jati, Samskriti O Sahitya*, Suniti Kr. Chatterjee.
12. *Jatibhed*, Kshitimohan Sen
13 *Mahabharater Samaj*, Sukhamaya Shastri
14. *Manav Prakriti*, Kshirode Chandra Roy Chowdhury
15 *Manav Samaj*, Tr , Rahul Sankrityayan
16 *Nayabanglar Gorapattan*, Binoy Sarkar
17 *Paschim Banger Samskriti*, Binoy Ghosh
18. *Samskritir Rupantar*, Gopal Halder.

ART

1 *Art O Ahitagni*, Jamini Kanta Som
2 *Bageswari Shilpa Prabandhavali*, Abanindranath Tagore
3. *Bharat Shilpa*, Abanindranath Tagore
4 *Bharat Shilpa*, Bimal Kr Datta
5 *Bharater Chitrakala*, Asoke Mitra
6. *Konaraker Vivaran*, Nirmal Kumar Bose
7 *Pashchim Europer Chitrakala*, Asoke Mitra
8 *Rangaballi*, Subodh Ghosh
9 *Rupavali*, Nandalal Bose
10 *Sahaj Chitra Shiksha*, Abanindranath Tagore
11 *Shilpa Charcha*, Nandalal Bose
12. *Shilpa Katha*, Nandalal Bose
13 *Shilpayan*, Abanindranath Tagore

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1 *Amar Balyakatha O Bombai Pravas*, Satyendranath Tagore, 1915
2 *Amar Jivan*, Deenabandhu Mitra, 1314 BS.
3 *Amar Jivan*, Rash Sundari
4 *Atma Jivani*, Devendranath Tagore
5 *Atmacharit*, P C Ray
6 *Atmacharit*, Rajnarayan Bose, 1909.
7 *Atmacharit*, Sibnath Shastri, 1918
8. *Atmacharit*, Tr , Jawaharlal Nehru
9 *Atmakatha*, Tr , M K Gandhi
10 *Bernard Shaw*, Rishidas.

11. *Bhakta Kabir*, Upendranath Das
12. *Bharat Pathik*, Subhas Chandra Bose
13 *Biplavi Jivaner Smriti*, Jadugopal Mukherjee
14. *Charit Katha*, Bipin Chandra Pal, 1323 BS
15 *Gandhi Charit*, Nirmal Kumar Bose
16 *Hasir Antarale*, Nalini Kanta Sarkar
17. *Huen Tsang*, Satyendra Kr Bose
18 *Jivan Charit*, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, 1889
19 *Jivani Bichitra Series*
20 *Karl Marx*, Sukumar Mitra
21. *Kaviguru Goethe*, Kazi Abdul Wadud
22 *Kono Khed Nai*, Tr , Krishna Hathee Singh
23 *Madhusmriti*, Nagendranath Som
24. *Madhusudan Datter Jivan Charit*, Jogindranath Bose.
25 *Maharshi Devendranath Thakur*, Ajit Chakravarty, 1916
26 *Mahatma Gandhi*, Tr , Romain Rolland
27 *Manishi Jivan Katha*, Sushil Ray
28. *Michael Madhusudan*, Pramathanath Bisi
29. *Nirvasiter Atmakatha*, Upendranath Bandyopadhyay
30 *Parampurush Sri Sri Ramkrishna*, Achintya Kr Sengupta
31 *Purano Katha*, Charu Chandra Datta
32. *Ramkrishner Jivan*, Tr , Romain Rolland
33 *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkalin Banga Samaj*, Sibnath Shastri, 1904
34. *Sahitya Sadhak Charitamala*, Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay
35 *Sekal Ar Ekal*, Rajnarain Bose, 1874
36 *Shakespeare*, Rishidas
37 *Smiritir Atale*, Amiyanath Sanyal
38 *Sri Ramkrishna Paramhamsa*, Brajendranath Banerjee & Sajanikanta Das
39 *Sri Sri Ramkrishna Kathamrita*, Sri Ma
40 *Sri Sri Ramkrishna Lila Prasanga*, Swami Saradananda
41 *Sri Sri Ramkrishna Punthi*, Akshoy Kumar Sen
42. *Vidyasagar*, Chandicharan Bandyopadhyay, 1302 BS
43 *Vivekananda Charit*, Satyendranath Mazumdar
44 *Vivekanander Jivan*, Tr , Romain Rolland
45 *Tirthankar*, Dilip Kumar Roy.

CARTOON

1. *Satyer Sandhane*, Piciel
2. *Subhash Alekhya*, Piciel

COLLECTED WORKS OF

1. Akshoy Kumar Baral
2. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

3 Balendranath Tagore
4. Bharat Chandra Roy
5. Dinabandhu Mitra
6 Dwijendralal Roy
7. Girishchandra Ghosh
8. Haraprasad Shastri
9 Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay.
10 Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar
11. Michael Madhusudan Datta
12 Nabin Chandra Sen
13 Panchkari Bandyopadhyay
14. Raja Rammohan Roy
15 Ramendra Sundar Trivedi
16 Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay
17 Sarat Kumari Chowdhurani

DANCE

1 *Java O Balir Nritya*, Santidev Ghosh
2 *Nritya*, Prahlad Das
3 *Nritya*, Pratima Devi

DRAMA

1 *Alamgir*, Kshirodprasad Bidyabinod
2 *Alibaba*, Kshirodprasad Bidyabindod, 1897
3 *Ashrumati*, Jyotirindranath Tagore
4 *Bhadrajan*, Taracharan Sikder, 1776
5 *Buddhadev Charit*, Girish Chandra Ghosh
6 *Chanda Koushik*, Jyotirindranath Tagore
7 *Chandragupta*, Dwijendralal Roy, 1911
8 *Eket Ki Bole Sabhyata?*, Michael Madhusudan Datta
9 *Hathat Nabab*, Jyotirindranath Tagore
10 *Khas Dakhal*, Amrita Lal Bose, 1912
11 *Kulinkula Sarvaswa Natak*, Ram Narayan Sharma, 1911
12 *Manmoyee Girls' School*, Rabindranath Maitra
13 *Mrichhakatik*, Jyotirindranath Tagore.
14 *Nildarpan*, Dinabandhu Mitra
15 *Profulla*, Girish Chandra Ghosh
16 *Rammohan*, Narayan Gangopadhyay.
17 *Ratnavali*, Jyotirindranath Tagore
18 *Sadhavar Ekadashi*, Dinabandhu Mitra
19 *Shahjahan*, Dwijendralal Roy, 1909
20 *Sharmishtha*, Michael Madhusudan Datta.

21 *Sırajudaulla*, Gırısh Chandra Ghosh.
22. *Sırajudaulla*, Sachın Sen Gupta.
23 *Srı Madhusudan*, Banaphul
24. *Vıkramorvashı*, Jyotırındranath Tagore.

ECONOMICS

1. *Arthanıtı O Karatatta*, Tr , Rıcardo
2 *Banglay Dhana Bıjnan*, Bınoy Sarkar
3. *Bharater Panya*, Kalıcharan Ghosh
4. *Ekaler Dhana Daulat*, Bınoy Sarkar
5 *Kautılıya Arthashastra*, Radhagovında Basak.
6 *Takar Katha*, Anath Gopal Sen

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2 *Bunıyadı Shıksha*, Bıjoy K Bhattacharjee
3 *Kather Kaj*, Lakshmıswar Sınha
4 *Shıksha*, Gurudas Bandyopadhyay, 1907
5. *Shıksha Bıjnan*, Bınoy Sarkar, 1910
6 *Shıksha O Monobıjnan*, Bıjoy K Bhattacharjee
7 *Shıksha O Sabhyata*, Atul Chandra Gupta
8 *Shıksha Prasanga*, Tr , Bertrand Russell
9. *Shıshu Parıvesh*, Samıran Chatterjee

ESSAY

1 *Amra O Tomra*, Dhurjatı P Mukherjee
2 *Bangalakshmir Brata Katha*, Ramendra Sunder Trıvedı, 1312 BS
3 *Barnamale Tattwa O Vıvıdh Prabandha*, Sukumar Ray
4 *Bıchınta*, Rajsekhar Bose
5 *Bhabbar Katha*, Swamı Vıvekananda
6 *Bharat Mahıla*, Haraprasad Shastrı, 1891.
7 *Desher Katha*, Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar, 1311 BS
8 *Halka Megher Mela*, Ed , Kalyan Dasgupta
9 *Hathat Alor Jhalkanı*, Buddhadev Bose
10 *Jagannather Rath*, Srı Aurobındo
11 *Kı Lıkhı*, Jogesh Chandra Roy
12 *Nadıpathe*, Atul Chandra Gupta
13 *Nana Chınta*, Dwıjendranath Tagore, 1920
14 *Nutan Kare Bancha*, Annada Sankar Ray.
15. *Param Ramanıya*, Ed , Sagarmay Ghosh.

16. *Pathe Bipathe*, Abanindranath.
17. *Prabandha Sangraha*, Pramatha Chowdhury.
18. *Prabandhamala*, Dwijendranath Tagore, 1920
19. *Prachya O Paschatya*, Swami Vivekananda.
20. *Sahitya Sankat*, Annada Sankar Ray.
21. *Sahityika*, Nalinikanta Gupta
22. *Shilpakatha*, Nalinikanta Gupta

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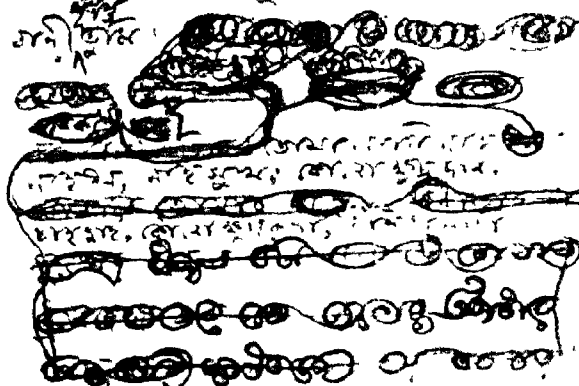
1. *Ayodhyar Begam*, Chandicharan Sen
2. *Alaler Gharer Dulal*, Tekchand Thakur, 1858
3. *Amrita Kumbher Sandhane*, Kalkut
4. *Aparajita*, Bibhuti Bhusan Bandyopadhyay
5. *Ashtadashi*, Ed , Sagarmaya Ghosh.
6. *Bangavijeta*, Ramesh Chandra Datta.
7. *Batris Simhasan*, Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, 1802
8. *Bharat Premkatha*, Subodh Ghosh.
9. *Bhuli Nai*, Manoj Bose, 1943
10. *Char Iari Katha*, Pramatha Chowdhury, 1916
11. *Dada Masayer Srestha Galpa*, Kedarnath Bandyopadhyay
12. *Dana*, Banaphul
13. *Didi*, Nirupama Devi, 1915
14. *Drishtipat*, Jajabar
15. *Ekada*, Gopal Halder
16. *Fossil*, Subodh Ghosh
17. *Gaddalika*, Rajsekhar Bose
18. *Granthavali*, Jagadish Gupta
19. *Hansulibanker Upakatha*, Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay
20. *Hitopadesh*, Bhabani C Banerjee, 1230 BS
21. *Hutumpachar Naksha*, Kaliprasanna Sinha
22. *Jagari*, Satinath Bhaduri
23. *Jalakallol*, Prabodh Kumar Sanyal
24. *Jangam*, Banaphul
25. *Jugantar*, Sibnath Shastri, 1902
26. *Kajjali*, Rajsekhar Bose
27. *Kankabati*, Trailakyonath Mukhopadhyay
28. *Kato Ajanare*, Sankar
29. *Katha Guccha*, Ed , Sudhir Sarkar
30. *Kimbadantir Deshe*, Subodh Ghosh
31. *Lipimala*, Ramram Bose, 1802
32. *Louha Kapat*, Jarasandha

Ms of a petition by the Bengali poet Bharat Chander addressed to Maharaj Krishan Chander (14th Cent.)

Facsimile of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's writing

Both the Mss. were on display at the Sahitya Akademi's Book Exhibition. By Courtesy of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta

33. *Ma*, Anurupa Devi, 1920.
34. *Mahaprasthaner Pathey*, Prabodh Kumar Sanyal.
35. *Mahasthavir Jatak*, Mahasthavir.
36. *Nagini Kanyar Kahini*, Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay.
37. *Nilanguliya*, Bibhutibhusan Mukhopadhyay.
38. *Padmanadir Majhi*, Manik Bandyopadhyay.
39. *Pather Panchali*, Bibhuti Bhusan Bandyopadhyay.
40 *Purva Banglar Samakalin Sera Galpa*.
41. *Purna Kumbha*, Rani Chanda.
42. *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra*, Ramram Bose, 1801.
43. *Ratri*, Banaphul.
44. *Robin Master*, Naresh Ch. Sengupta.
45. *Sahanama*.
46. *Shashanke*, Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyay, 1919.
47. *Satyasatya*, Annada Sankar Ray.
48 *Shakuntala*, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar.
49 *Sitar Vanavas*, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar.
50 *Site Upekshita*, Ranjan.
51 *Srestha Galpa*, Asapurna Devi.
52. *Srestha Galpa*, Banaphul.
53 *Srestha Galpa*, Bibhuti Bhusan Bandyopadhyay.
54 *Srestha Galpa*, Bibhuti Bhusan Mukhopadhyay.
55. *Srestha Galpa*, Manoj Bose
56. *Srestha Galpa*, Narendranath Mitra.
57. *Srestha Galpa*, Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay
58 *Srestha Galpa*, Premendra Mitra
59 *Srestha Galpa*, Sailajananda Mukhopadhyay.
60 *Srestha Galpa*, Saratchandra Chattopadhyay.
61. *Srestha Galpa*, Saroj Kumar Roychowdhury.
62. *Srestha Galpa*, Subodh Ghosh
63 *Srestha Galpa*, Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay.
64 *Srestha Galpa*, Upendranath Gangopadhyay.
65. *Swanirvachita Galpa*, Achintya Sengupta.
66. *Swanirvachita Galpa*, Prabodh Kumar Sanyal.
67. *Swarnalata*, Taraknath Gangopadhyay.
68. *Tithidore*, Buddhadev Bose.
69. *Tota Itihas*, Chandicharan Munshi, 1825.
70. *Upanivesh*, Narayan Gangopadhyay.

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1. *Banglar Lokkatha*, Lalbehari De.
2. *Chhelebhulano Chara*, Nityananda Goswami.
3. *Dhap Sangeet*, Madhusudan Kinnar, 1298 BS.

4 *Gopichander Gan.*
5. *Haramani*, Mansuruddin.
6 *Maimansinher Gitika*, Dinesh Chandra Sen
7. *Patua Sangeet*, Gurusaday Datta.
8. *Purvabanga Gitika*, Dinesh Chandra Sen.
9. *Thakurdadar Jhuli*, Dakshinaranjan Mitra Mazumdar.
10 *Thakurmar Jhuli*, Dakshinaranjan Mitra Mazumdar.

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1. *Adisur O Ballal Sen*, P S Roychowdhury, 1284 BS.
2 *Aitihasik Prabandha*, Binoy Kumar Sarkar, 1912.
3. *Asoka*, Surendranath Sen.
4. *Asoke Lipi*, Amulya Chandra Sen
5 *Assam Buranji*, Haliram Dhekial Phukan, 1236 BS
6 *Banglar Itihas*, Gobinda Chandra Sen, 1248 BS
7. *Banglar Itihas*, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, 1935 Sambat.
8 *Banglar Itihas (Nababi Amal)*, Kaliprasanna Banerjee, 1315 BS.
9. *Banglar Itihas*, Rakhaldas Banerjee
10 *Banglar Itihas Sadhana*, Probodh Chandra Sen
11 *Bangladesher Itihas*, Ramesh Ch Majumdar.
12. *Bharat Parichay*, Prabhat Kr Mukhopadhyaya, 1334 BS
13. *Bharat Sandhane*, Tr , Jawaharlal Nehru
14 *Bharatvarsher Itihas*, Jadugopal Chatterjee, 1885
15 *Bharatvarsher Itihas*, Nilmani Basak, 1857.
16 *Biswa Itihas Prasange*, Tr , Jawaharlal Nehru
17 *Buddha Katha*, Amulya Chandra Sen
18 *Chiner Itihas*, Krishndhan Banerjee, 1865
19 *Congress*, Aghornath Banerjee, 1297 BS
20 *Dhakar Itihas*, Jatindra Mohan Roy, 1319 BS
21 *Gouralekhamala*, Akshoy Kumar Maitreya, 1319 BS.
22 *Gourarajamala*, Ramaprasad Chanda, 1319 BS.
23 *Itihasmala*, W Carey, 1821.
24. *Jasohar Khulnar Itihas*, Satischandra Mitra, 1321-29 BS
25. *Kalikatar Katha*, Pramatha Nath Mallik
26 *Maharaja Krishnachandra Rayassa Charitram*, Rajiblochan Mukherjee, 1805
27 *Megasthaneser Bharat Vivaran*, Rajanikanta Guha, 1318 BS
28 *Mirkasim*, Akshoy Kumar Maitreya, 1905
29. *Mursidabad Kahini*, Nikhilnath Roy, 1304 BS.
30. *Orissar Itihas*, Sibchandra Some, 1867.
31. *Panjab Itihas*, Rajnarain Bhattacharya, 1847.
32. *Prachin Bharat*, Rampran Gupta, 1914.

33. *Prachin Bharatiya Sabhyatar Itihas*, Prafulla Ch. Ghosh.
34. *Prachin Kalikata Parichay*, Harihar Sett.
35. *Pragaitihasik Mahenjodaro*, Kunjabehari Goswami.
36. *Prithivir Itihas*, Deviprasad Chattopadhyay.
37. *Prithivir Itihas*, Durgadas Lahiri, 1317-26 BS.
38 *Rajabali*, Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, 1808.
39. *Samsamayik Bharat*, Jogindranath Samadder, 1320-29 BS.
40. *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, Brajendranath Banerjee.
41 *Sivaji*, Jadunath Sarkar.
42. *Sikh Itihas*, Tr , Durgadas Lahiri, 1314 BS.
43. *Sipahijuddher Itihas*, Rajanikanta Gupta.
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3 *Banga Bhasha O Sahitya*, Dinesh Chandra Sen, 1896.
4 *Banga Sahitya Vishayak Prastav*, Ramgati Nyayratna.
5 *Bangiya Natya Shalar Itihas*, Brajendranath Banerjee.
6 *Bangla Nataker Itihas*, Ajit Kumar Ghosh
7 *Bangla Natya Sahityer Itihas*, Asutosh Bhattacharyya
8 *Bangla Sahityer Itihas*, Sajani Kanta Das
9. *Bangla Sahityer Itihas*, Sukumar Sen
10 *Bangla Upanyaser Dhara*, Srikumar Bandyopadhyay.
11. *Banglar Kavya*, Humayun Kabir.
12 *Islami Bangla Sahitya*, Sukumar Sen.
13. *Kavi Jaydev O Git Govindo*, Hareskrishna Mukherjee.
14 *Nepale Bangla Natak*, Nanigopal Banerjee.
15 *Mangal Kavyer Itihas*, Asutosh Bhattacharyya.
16 *Samalochana Sahitya*, Ed , Srikumar Bandyopadhyay.
17. *Sarat Chandra*, Subodh Sengupta.

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1. *Adalat Timir Nasak*, Rammohun Roy, 1828.
2. *Ain Darpan.*
3. *Dewani Ainer Sangraha*, Marshman, 1843.
4. *Mitakshara Darpan*, Lakshmi Narayan Naylankar, 1231 BS.
5. *Mitakshara Day Vibhag*, Sukhamay Bhattacharya.
6. *Pratna Vijnan*, Naresh Ch. Sengupta.

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2 *Granthagar*, Munındra Krıshna Dev.
3. *Granthagar O Granthagarik*, Raȷ Kumar Mukhopadhyay.
4. *Granthagar Parichalana*, Sukhen Chattopadhyay.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. *Bangalır Itihas*, Nıhar Ranȷan Roy.
2 *Lokshıksha Granthamala*.
3 *Prachın Bangla Patra Sankalan*, Surendranath Sen.
4 *Visva Vidya Sangraha*.

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1 *Banglar Sangeet*, Raȷyeswar Mıtra
2 *Geeta Pravesıka*, Gopeswar Bandyopadhyay.
3 *Katha O Sur*, Dhurȷatı P. Mukherȷee
4 *Rag Nırnay*, Rabındralal Roy
5 *Rag O Rup*, Swamı Avedananda.
6 *Sangeet O Samskrıtı*, Swamı Praȷnananda
7 *Sangeet Pravesh*, Suresh Chakravarty.
8. *Satagan*, Sarala Devı

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1 *Bahoo Darshan*, Neelrutna Halder, 1826
2. *Bange Navya Nyay*, Dınesh Chandra Bhatta.
3 *Banglar Baul*, Kshıtımohan Sen.
4 *Bhaktı Yoga*, Aswını Kumar Datta.
5 *Bhaktı Yoga*, Swamı Vıvekananda.
6 *Bharat Katha*, Tr , Raȷagopalacharı
7 *Bharatdarshnsar*, Umeshchandra Bhattacharya
8 *Bharatıya Darshaner Bhumıka*, Surendranath Dasgupta.
9 *Bodhı Sattabadan Kalpalata*, Tr , Sarachchandra Das, 1319 BS
10 *Bouddha Dharma*, Satyendranath Tagore.
11 *Brahmadharmer Vyakhyan*, Devendranath Tagore.
12. *Chıkago Vaktrita*, Swami Vıvekananda.
13 *Dadu*, Kshıtımohan Sen Shastrı
14. *Darshaner Itıvrıtta*, Monoranȷan Roy
15. *Dharma Jıvan*, Sıbnath Shastrı, 1322 BS.
16 *Dıvya Jivan*, Tr , Srı Aurobındo.

17. *Gatha Saptashati*, Tr., Radhagovindo Basak.
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20. *Gita Rahasya*, Tr., B G Tilak
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In all about 600 books were on display. For lack of space several books, specially novels and books of poems, could not be displayed and have not been included in the above list. Publication year given is only of those editions which were published before 1920. BS stands for Bangiya Shaka or the Bengali era.—*Ed.*

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Errata

The Editor regrets the following errors and omissions which occurred in Vol 1, No 1 of 'Indian Literature':

1 On page 105, line 8 from bottom, read 'S N Das' for 'G C. Misra'as the author of *Fasal* (Crop).
2 On page 107, line 7 from bottom, after *Mo Swapnara Kashmir* (The Kashmir of My Dreams), add 'by Dr. K.B Das'
3. On page 107, para 4, the Man Mohan Press is shown as Publishers of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. It should read Janasakti Pustakalaya.

Publications of Sahitya Akademi

Assamese

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2. *Sanchayana* (An anthology of Assamese poetry) edited by Maheswar Neog. Published by Sahitya Akademi (in Press).

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